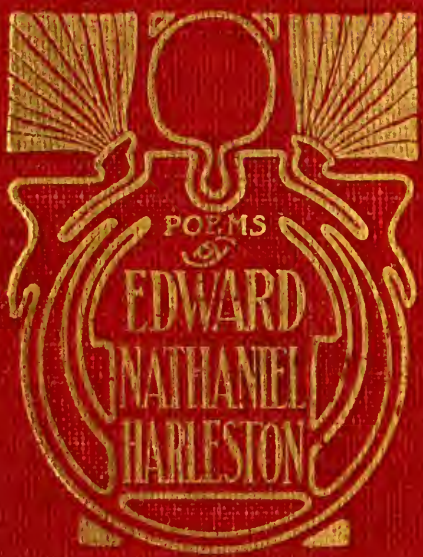
The Toiler's Life



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The Toiler's Life

Edw. N. Harleston.

The Toiler's Life

POEMS

By

Edward Nathaniel Harleston

With an Introduction by

L. S. Crandall

Philadelphia

The Jenson Press

1907

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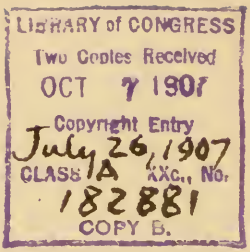

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TO

MY MOTHER

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Introduction

Readers of this book will want to know something of the life and personality of its author,—Mr. Edward Nathaniel Harleston. More especially will this interest in him be stirred if, at the outset, it is understood that he is just an unassuming, modest and faithful Afro-American working man, whose work as an author and poet has all been done at odd moments snatched from the hours of regular labor and under conditions of disadvantage that make him to be a striking confirmation of the fact that genius is the exclusive heritage of no race or condition of men.

Mr. Harleston was born June 1st, 1869, in Charleston, S. C., where he attended public school for a time and later spent three terms at Claflin University, in Orangeburgh. He also received some private instruction; but any one familiar with the conditions prevailing in South Carolina in the period of young Harleston's boyhood will know that his opportunities for schooling were necessarily meagre. His parents were working people,—his maternal grandfather being a pure-blooded San Domingo negro and his paternal grandfather an Englishman. After the death of his father and while yet a mere boy Mr. Harleston took

up the task of gaining a livelihood, and we find him thereafter for several years working in different machine shops of his native city. In 1890 he engaged for the first time in work of a semi-public character, being appointed census enumerator. For his work in this connection he received special mention and the general commendation of his superiors.

On the 26th of April, 1893, he was married to Miss Martha Charlotte Gadsden, who died February 9th, 1894, leaving one son,—Edward Gadsden.

In 1895 Mr. Harleston received from Governor Evans the commission (with captain's rank) of Judge Advocate of the First National Guards of South Carolina, and he thereafter received many marks of confidence at the hands of his fellow citizens by being selected to represent them in local and State political conventions.

In addition to the poems appearing in this book, all of which are of very recent date, Mr. Harleston has produced several sacred songs of wide acceptance, among which may be mentioned "We Are His Children" and "The Man of Galilee," which are to appear in a new Sunday-school Hymnal now being compiled and published at Philadelphia.

But Mr. Harleston is best known as the able and genial Mechanical Superintendent and Custodian of Heinz Ocean Pier at Atlantic City, New Jersey, where for nearly ten years his face has been as familiar as "ocean breezes" to the pleasure-seeking public. Here, day after day, with unfailing politeness, he answers

the thousands and thousands of questions (wise and—otherwise) propounded by the thronging visitors, and with unruffled urbanity refuses each and every offered tip, and adds each and every questioner to his list of friends.

L. S. Crandall.

The Toiler's Life

THE BRIGAND GAMBLERS.

HIGH up in the dome of a castle,
A light in the distance shone,
And I heard a voice, while passing,
Loudly crying, "I'm claiming my own!"
Standing still and eagerly listn'ing
For the voices now silent to me,
I looked to the edge of the curbing,
The forms of three men I could see.

One man I noticed particularly,
With broad hat drawn down on his ear,
Crouched close at the side of a window,
While another stood trembling with fear
A voice cried out with emotion,
"It is for the woman I've played!
I'll not part with her possession!
I won the best of the trade!"

One, tall in stature, and handsome,
With face tinted crimson red,
In one hand holding a weapon,
For release of a woman plead.

Another cried, "You've won the gold;
And now for the jewels we've played!
I'm only a brigand gambler,
To murder you, I'm not afraid!"

I heard cries of "Away with the jewels!
For the gold, I have no use!
We played with cards well shuffled,
And the woman I will not lose!"
"Now, on my oath I'll have her!
Do your best, villain!" one cried.
"That woman is but a man passing!"
"You rascal, I'll prove that you lied!"

"I can tell by the swell of her bosom,
And eyes, black and perfect as beads,
Filled with tears as clear as the dewdrops;
She's a woman of the finest of breeds!"
These brigands who lived on the mountains,
In this great city pillaging went,
Till they came to the gates of a castle
Where slumbered a prince in content.

Silently stealing up to the great door,
Finding the well-armed guard asleep at his post,
They disarmed him, then his hands did fasten,
And forced him to give the name of his host.
The city slumbered in stillness;
The moon laughed at brigands so bold,
While they were bent on murder
To secure rare jewels and gold.

The Toiler's Life

Inside, the guard told them, were millions—
Art that no man could appraise,
Collections from Rome by its masters
And books of the old Roman days.
And as they entered that castle,
With Corinthian capitals raised high,
The moon forced herself through wheel windows,
Then hid in the clouds with a sigh.

Once in the halls, they saw statues
Of Apollo, Plato and Proserpine,
Idols of Mars and Jupiter, carved in mythology's time,
Tapestry artistically beautiful and rugs magnificently fine.
On marble walls were fine paintings,
All of them wonderful to behold;
At the head of a bronze winding stairway
Were Roman busts molded in gold.

Then marching up into the chamber,
Speaking quietly, arranging their plans,
On going in they drew back the canopy
Where the prince slept with scepter in hands.
The moonlight, coming in through a window
Clearer than a rippling brook,
And stars, from their heavenly lining,
Furnished light while the jewels they took.

The Toiler's Life

One turned to admire a rare painting,
While the princess lay slumbering at ease,
With her hands folded on her bosom,
In smiles.—E'en the gods she would please.
The moon, now preparing for the tragedy,
Hid her silvery face in a cloud.
The brigands cried, "Let's take the woman!"
In voices of anger and loud.

"We'll kill first the man without tussle.
The woman? We'll take her to win
High up in the dome of the castle,
And see what luck we are in."
Up they carried her, well drugged with ether,
While the moon freed herself from a cloud
To help them with their queenly burden.
They cursed it and in anger grew loud.

A challenge from one, "Who'd dare kiss her?"
Another cried, "This game we'll play with the cards!
He who wins takes the woman;
The next man takes jewels and fads."
The princess, partly roused from her slumber,
Watching them at play for her soul,
Dizzy from the administered ether,
Drew tightly her garment of gold.

"What cards do you hold, fellow?
Then discard. That will settle the question

Whose queen this woman will be."
Of jewels they did not make mention.
"If I win," cried the handsome one,
"I'll take her away with me.
She'll be my own queen forever.
I care not for moon or for sea."

But the moon, moving on in anger,
Determined that the guard should be free;
For, casting herself on the dead master,
Took his image for the brave knights to see.
A nightingale's song caught the ear of a traveler,
Who followed it to a high cedar tree,
Where the murderous brigands had fastened
The guard that the moon would set free.

He smiled at the silent witness,
But the nightingale continued its song.
Untying the guard, said the traveler,
"Who tied thee, and what can be wrong?"
The moon went down, slowly dying,
To be followed by early dawn.
The stars no longer shone in brightness
At the sound of the clarion's horn.

O'er plains, the sheep, going grazing,
Their good shepherd's voice heard in space,
Yet one old sheep to him bleated,
As the sun tried to show his bright face.

The Toiler's Life

To the knight in the prince's barracks
Some winged messenger did fly,
To tell of the tragedy in the castle
And how their good ruler did die.

High up in the dome of the castle,
Where the brigands had played away,
The princess, with heaving bosom,
Thanked God for the breaking of day.
"Advance!" cried the brave old captain,
As armored knights their horses did mount.
Swiftly through the streets they were carried,
For every moment did count.

O'er hilltops now they fleetly sped
In answer to the call,
To reach yon Roman castle where
A princely head did fall.
The princess, a living prisoner,
Lay in that castle's dome.
The guard who slept on duty
Caused tragedy in that home.

I heard the tramp of horses
Galloping o'er sacred ground.
They were rushing on in madness,
Because their ruler had been wronged.
Every one of those brigand gamblers
Got his just deserts.
They fought for a woman's possession,
And died amid their threats.

The Toiler's Life

Not long since the moon in anger
  Forced herself over the hills,
In contempt for the bold assassins.
  The nightingale re-echoed its thrills.
And now the sun was shining;
  His rays on the dewdrops did fall.
The clarion's horn was re-echoing
  Its gallant knighthood call.

All over the city the people
  Were singing their morning mass.
The sheep were loudly bleating
  As o'er meadows they did pass.
Hovering over the castle,
  Where in death their ruler slept,
The sun hid his face in a dark cloud
  And silently he wept.

On the knights rode through the great gates,
  Exclaiming, "Those brigands must die,
High up in the dome of the castle,
  Where our saintly princess doth lie!"
"We are close on the heels of the gamblers.
  Dismount! the captain cried.
They marched to the dome of the castle,
  But the gamblers had fought there and died.

"Go ring the bells in the tower.
  Ring the death knell" he said;
"For your prince was murdered by brigands,
  While slumbering peacefully in bed."

The Toiler's Life

The sun came out as if in sorrow.
His rays, falling on that dome,
Found death in that old Roman castle
And sadness in every home.

OUR PRAYER.

OUR dearest God in whom we trust, yet disobey,
In what we write or try to say,
Inspire a thought of rich supply,
That while we live all men will try
To imitate the sublimeness of Thy love
Through all the climes of man's career,
Thou hast ever made it clear,
That when we die we still can be
A soul of immortality.
Thy mystifying powers are but visions of what can be.
And so are the little grains of sand,
And foaming, tempestuous sea
Rolling in madness toward the shore,
Kissed and beautified by the dazzling sun,
Reminders of the Infinite God,
Whose reflections we see
In the wonderful and magnificent sky.
The tranquility of the silvery moon
Whose splendor lends enchantment to the night,
Tells us of the sublimeness of Thy majestic power.
The hills and mountains, whose valleys are made
fragrant

The Toiler's Life

By the innocent and beautiful flowers,
Rocked as they are fanned by the ceaseless winds,
Are but visions of love, inspiring us to worship at the Shrine,
Of the omnipotent and triumphant God.
The earth upon which we walk,
And the perfumed air that we breathe,
Are but few of the enjoyable paths through which we move,
Onward and upward to the "Great Celestial Throne."
And yet we cannot understand
Thy moving, among us, of a vengeance
Demanding death throughout the land.
But as Thy grace is sufficient,
Help us to understand the fullness of Thy love.
Look then with compassion upon all mankind,
Great and small, weak and strong;
Smile, and none will go wrong.

THE SEASONS

PART I—WINTER

WITH mighty force, the blustering winds
Whip the sea that lulls and sins,
And, like the swallow in its arrowy flight,
Mourns the loss of summer's warmth and light.

With cheerless lure, the dark brown burr,
The leafless oak and the reindeer's fur

The Toiler's Life

Are shown, by the silvery moon's bright light,
To the birds that build their nests by night.

Softly fade the rays of glittering sun;
The plowman rests; his daily task is done.
At early dawn, the little birds have flown,
And one great harvest to the world is shown.

The screech of the owl, like the mason's trowel,
With the cry of the swan and cackling fowl,
Is heard at the pond, where the water's now ice,
And fresh green holly perfumes like spice.

The little wren, like our faithful friend
The woodpecker, buries his bill to pretend
To hide from the glare of the bright rays of sun;
And the ringing sleigh bells tell us of fun.

The old gobbler brustles with head red as gore;
The hen, he follows and would restore
His lost of the season by winter's tear,
And spurns the iceland's crystal glare.

The little silk-worm no longer toils;
The meadow's supplies now lie in spoils,
And where clear waters once did flow,
Is where the icebergs live and grow.

The geese take flight to the huntsman's delight;
The plowman's fields are covered in white;

The Toiler's Life

The fleet deer leads no more the hare;
He too goes feasting here and there.

The plowman treads no more the fertile bed;
The harvest past, he wearily is led,
As, with the poor, to the mission he doth stroll,
While the rich lend applaud to the flowing bowl.

With the lull of the day in its mantle of white,
They sit by the fireside, and watch in fright,
A poor old tramp, who tries to pray
As he huddles himself in a mound of hay.

He sullenly frowns as he sees the ice,
And with doleful heart, he thinks of the price
Of the crust of bread with which he is fed
And the hay on which he lays his head.

The ocean splashes upon the shore;
The raging billows, in madness, roar;
And the owl cries in the withered brush
As he waits the song of the merry thrush.

The hemlock thrives, though the beetle dies,
And the peacock in his plumage flies.
He breaks away from the huntsman's lay
And buries his head in the plowman's hay.

The Toiler's Life

The toiler plods o'er fields of white;
The plains, once green, are brown and trite,
And bleating sheep, to the winds, echo
To tell the shepherd they'd go.

'Tis a waste of time, yet the raven repines
When the blackbird perches on his pines;
They both contend and raise a muck
When told of the little sparrow's luck.

The busy bees die in their cells;
The little snow-bird meekly tells
The plowman that where he did sow,
Is covered now in ice and snow.

The hearts are gay in the squirrel's lay;
He cracks a walnut while at play;
Then list'ning takes the empty shell
To toss it, at the curfew's knell.

The woodman's time does not relax;
The man, who shoulders well his axe,
Hews all, but one old hollow tree,
To tell the hounds where the game must be.

In the grave old world where the meadow's still,
The woodman holds up his glass to fill,
When the chilling winds, to his surprise,
Announce to him the one who dies.

The Toiler's Life

The sun is setting o'er the hills;
The warbler suddenly stops his thrills
To watch the soul of the toiler in flight—
The toiler who plowed every furrow aright.

PART II—SPRING

THE sun frees itself from a dark gray cloud;
The toiler stands viewing his fields to be plowed,
And on the horizon is faintly seen
The discarded mantle of Winter's queen.

The sky is shown in red to me;
No clouds upon its face I see,
The sun's bright rays now falling fast,
Tell the woodman that his season's past.

The plowman now inspects with care
The green sprouts peeping here and there.
He tries to plow each furrow straight
Like his dead companion and winter mate.

The fields are green with sprouting grass;
The woodman no longer fills his glass,
And all the trees are turning green,
Whereupon yesterday snow was seen.

The hounds no more the game will run;
The huntsman finds no place to gun,
And the once dark eve so grim to me
Is now resplendent and I can see.

The Toiler's Life

The bees come from their honeycombs,
Like those who live in princely homes;
The tramp returns and begs again
From the man who sheltered him from rain.

The waves now splash and madly flow;
The surf's white foam is free from snow,
And the sea-gull seems to kiss the sky
Where on yesterday he dared not fly.

The deer is thinking of the spring;
He lingers where the ivys cling,
For the mountain, where he lived in fear,
Is free from ice and Winter's tear.

The rippling waters, like crystal flow;
The eagle seeks the mountain's snow,
And where he captured little prawns,
Is where the doe refreshes her fawns.

The sun no longer from us hides
The full moon's high and surging tides,
And no more icebergs round us lie.
They now have thawed and the billows run high.

The rose peeps from its winter bed;
The children throughout the forest tread;
They romp and play where the flowers grow best,
And watch the robin build her nest.

The Toiler's Life

The birds have all returned to sing;
The faithful shepherd welcomes spring;
Where sheets of ice, like crystal, laid,
The toiler's work is now displayed.

The crane catches fish and triumphantly flies
O'er the fisher who casts his net as he tries
To hear the ocean's bitter sigh,
For he loves best the water when 'tis high.

The woodman puts away his axe;
The bees now hum and make their wax;
The little worm its silk thread spins,
And the ocean mopes for its grievous sins

The sun smiles on every little sprout;
The trees now turn their blossoms out,
And hidden o'er the distant hills,
The robin sends out its joyous thrills.

The people in the mission pray and sing;
The nightingale sings its song of spring,
And all the world in gay festoon
Is shown to me by the silvery moon.

The plowman scatters, in earth, his seeds
And digs up the roots of sprouting weeds,
For the woodman's time is nearly done
And he lies basking in the sun.

The Toiler's Life

The owl screetches at the frightened thrush;
The day has left him a sudden hush.
As the woodman watches the trees that fall,
He clearly hears the Reaper's call.

The sunset's red o'er meadows spread;
The shadow of death falls on his head.
Death fills the woodman's flowing bowl
Then pierces an arrow into his soul.

The huntsman, seeing what time has wrought,
Counts the game his hounds have caught,
And all nature to them doth sing
Of the death of winter and birth of spring.

PART III—SUMMER

THE season of mating now is past;
The sun its brightness o'er me doth cast.
Its strong reflections throughout the day
Are withering the foliage and curing the hay.

All the plowman's seeds are sown,
And the sparrow's young from the nest have flown.
The woodman sharpens well his axe
And robs the bees' honey from its chambers of wax

The little sprouts are now full grown,
For the brilliant sun on them hath shone;

The Toiler's Life

The roses are blooming in grassy beds,
While toilers are perishing with sunstruck heads.

The cooling showers tearfully fall
In answer to the lightning's call,
And the thunder's peals unnerve the weak,
While the mountain air the rich men seek.

The nightingale cares not for the owl's hoot;
The trees are laden with their ripe fruit;
The swan is master of the lakes,
And the sun much water from them takes

To help the plowman who has sown
The seeds from which his plants have grown,
And the woodman dares not hew a tree
Against the huntsman's vigilant plea.

O'er the fields, green with brush,
The owl no longer frightens the thrush,
And all the fawns have thriven and grown.
The buck no longer urges them on.

Now he goes feasting with his mate
And cares not for the gunner's wait.
He sniffs at ease the fragrant air
As freely as the mountain hare.

The parching heat of summer is cast
In humidity falling quiet and fast,

The Toiler's Life

On the plowman who rises at early dawn
When the golden sunbeams first are shown.

He first looks at the sky of blue,
Then views the drops of sparkling dew,
And cackling fowls with wings outspread,
That help supply his daily bread.

With sweat drops rising on his brow
And hands now blistered from his plow,
He gazes o'er his fields of corn;
Unlike the tramp, he struggles on.

When laying aside his plow at noon,
His fields are like one gay festoon;
He prays for the stoppage of summer's drought
That the seeds still in the ground might sprout.

The old gobbler stands with wings outspread
And loudly gobbles while being fed;
The hen calls up her little brood
From where the gander's cries are rude.

The birds are singing everywhere;
They know that God for them doth care.
The little fish ne'er make a sound,
But in the water many are found.

Where once the dreary lure abode,
Frogs sing in ditches along the road.

The Toiler's Life

In his crook the shepherd cuts a notch,
While his faithful dog the sheep doth watch.

Now dying foliage everywhere is seen,
Even the withered leaves of winter's green.
No holly berries perfume the air,
But the scent of flowers is everywhere.

The huntsman's rest seems to him too long;
He sighs when he hears the robin's song.
While resting beneath an old elm tree,
He hears the owl's triumphant plea.

He perches himself where the sun is bright
And waits to devour his prey by night.
With no thought of the gunner's scold,
He echoes throughout the forest bold.

The huntsman pauses to examine his gun
And pines for the time when his hounds will run.
His season is coming; he sadly doth sigh
As he sees on the horizon a golden sky.

He mutely ignores the plowman's task,
Then from his bag, he draws a flask,
To drink, when death's shadow falls on his face
And others come to take his place.

SOMETIME, O MOTHER!

SOMETIME in the morning
On the green and dewy hill,
When all around is stillness
And the thrush sends out its thrill;
In the dawning of the morning
When rays on dewdrops shine,
I'll think of thee, O mother.
For thy love, thy boy doth pine.

Sometime in the noon-day,
When the world is all aglow,
When happily I remember
All thy blessings of long ago;
The sun will find its center;
I'll be busy as a bee,
But even then, O mother,
Thy boy will remember thee.

Sometime in the evening,
Plodding homeward, God knows where,
When the sun is bent on setting
In a sky that's blue and clear;
When the busy bees and swallows
Will be gone out of our sight,
I'll think of thee, O mother.
Would that you were here to-night.

Sometime in the winter
On a cold and stormy night,

The Toiler's Life

When the swallows shall have left us
And no flowers are in sight;
When the trees are bent and broken
By the chilling winds that blow,
Even then, O mother,
'Tis thy love that I would know.

Sometime in the springtime,
With the humming of the bees,
When the trees, once bent and broken,
Regain their life and little leaves;
When the bluebird and the swallow
Come from their long winter's rest,
Tell me then, O mother,
Have I acted for the best?

Sometime in the summer,—
Not the saddest one of rest,—
When the bluebird and the swallow
Turn their young out from the nest;
When the bees have made their honey
And flowers have all bloomed,
Saddest then, O mother,
From thy teachings, I have roamed.

THE OLD YEAR.

COLD and chilling winds fill the air
And no warmth comes from the sun;
My feet are tired; my eyes are blurred
And I'm too old to run.

The Toiler's Life

My finger tips sting and burn;
  My ears are numb and red;
The ice is gathering everywhere;
  I've no place to rest my head.

The wind is sharp and cutting;
  My breath floats on the air;
The trees are sadly weeping
  And I am in despair.

The sun is bent on hiding;
  No longer it kisses the ground;
And crystal ice is clinging
  To trees now being crowned.

As I walk along in space,
  I scarce can draw my breath,
For the searching winds
  Cause suffering and reap death.

All the trees crack, and bend
  Their limbs as I go by;
The little sparrows hop at play.
  'Tis too cold for them to fly.

My dog's too cold to wag his tail;
  The cat is keeping shy;
I have no fire in my stove
  And no one heeds my cry.

The Toiler's Life

Everything is frozen up
  Save yonder flowing spring.
The housetop's covered white
  E'en where the ivys cling.

Everybody's doors are closed;
  I hear no shepherd's horn,
Yet a little robin sings
  His song of Christmas morn.

Holly green with berries red,
  Is fragrant everywhere.
In the cold, Jack Frost of old
  Is causing many a tear.

I listen to the ringing bells
  Of sleighs that pass me by,
For the air is cold and the year is old
  And will soon pass away and die.

Think of the things that have been done
  So helpful to mankind,
Then look back; see what you've won,
  And keep this year in mind.

'Tis not summer when you go,
  And your mind is always clear.
You have made this season cold
  To welcome the coming New Year.

The Toiler's Life

I'm not too old to cheer you on
  In your season of joy and pride,
For where to-day you lay your head,
  Others before have wept and died.

INSANITY AND LOVE.

MAD did you say? Why can't you see
Those eyes, like demons', staring at me?
Listen! I hear a soul in despair.
The cry's growing fainter, dying on the air.
I am not mad. Dragons I never fear,
Though men profane while I'm at prayer.
Think you I'm mad, because I pray?
No, I'm not mad; pray let me stay.

Why have you lured me here where you have no bed,
Bars for your windows and lights of crimson red?
It almost drives me mad, that solemn knell,
Whose every chime of my love's death doth tell.
  Deeper than the ocean wild
Oft in the midnight stillness, I see her face so fair,
And you, at your demon's business, hear not my humble prayer.
Now you think me mad,

But when I see her form I'm glad.
See her hair upheavel as her bosom swells,

And you say I'm mad. Listen! hear those chiming bells.
Nurse her as her mother would. Count not the cost.
See those flames! I'm lost! I'm lost!
I can see her eyes—eyes of purest blue,
And you think I'm mad because my love is true.
Why did she leave me here thus to die?
Yes, I'm mad! I'm mad! but dare not cry.

ONE THING AT A TIME.

I LIGHT my pipe and with delight
I call my muse, then go and write
On anything, excepting news.
Some bonny subject I always choose.

In the woods beside a rippling brook
I smoke and quietly bait my hook;
Then cast it where the fish run free
And sunbeams cast their rays on me.

When the breeze is still I read my book—
The fish will not dare rob my hook,
For in water clear their forms I see,
But not a fish will bite for me.

I watch the robin in his flight,
Then take my pad and try to write;
But in despair my muse has flown.
I know the fault is all my own.

The Toiler's Life

I find japonicas in full bloom;
They gently lure me from my gloom
And lead me where my muse has flown.
Again I claim it for my own.

Then I return and find my line
Has grown to be an ivy vine.
The waters from the brook are gone,
And no smoke from my pipe is drawn.

I sit and watch the robin return.
He chirps, "I hope you'll learn
To do just one thing at a time,
Or your poet's muse will never rhyme."

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

THE balmy zephyr fans the air
As I kneel to God in prayer,
Away from the trumpeter's rising blast,
And tell Him of my sinful past.

His wondrous love encircles me,
And in the heavens I can see
That every star for me doth shine
To tell me of His peace divine.

I cannot tell you why 'tis so,
But I feel His power where'er I go.

The Toiler's Life

It comforts me by night and day,
No matter where I kneel and pray.

Salvation's power to me is shown
In sweet communion at His throne.
Without money, jewels or gold,
His power is for thee,—young and old.

Prayer is my feast in time of rest,
For, when in sorrow, God loves best.
His power is free in any clan;
His grace is balm to every man.

In Africa's jungles, you find him there;
In heathen China and everywhere.
With humble hearts, make your wishes known,
And pray for salvation at His throne.

Whether from sorrow, remorse or sin,
Confess your faults and let Him in.
Take fresh courage! Hail the King!
And to the heathen, glad tidings bring.

Let them call from far and near,
For He has power to answer prayer.
Oft in the midnight stillness cry,
"Bless me, Father, or I die."

ATONEMENT.

NOW, I lay me down to sleep,"
Thou my secret, Lord, doth keep.
Heareth Thou my humble prayer,
Then help me through the coming year.

My sinful heart to Thee I give.
Give me wisdom while I live;
Keep me, then, O Lord, from harm,
And protect me with Thine arm.

Make me pure and whole within;
Lead me from the paths of sin;
Make my life, like Thine, sublime,
That I may live my allotted time.

Let Thy shadow on me fall
As patiently I wait Thy call.
Where Thy grace and mercy flow,
Lead me, Father, when I go.

Let me not Thy name profane,
That I Thy mercy might obtain.
For all my sins I would atone;
Keep me, Jesus, for Thine own.

MAMMA'S BABY SONG.

LITTLE eyes all shining bright,
Little feet so snowy white,
Little hands my fingers catch,
Little dimples we cannot match,

The Toiler's Life

Little head round as a ball,
Little mouth so trim and small,
Little sleep with so much coo,
Your mamma sees when rocking you.

Little eyes to see God's light,
Little feet to be led aright,
Little dimples to me appeal,
Little hands that will not steal,
Little head wise—not vain,—
Little mouth will not profane,
Little sleep and so much coo,
Your mamma sees when loving you.

Little angel laid in bed,
Little pillow 'neath your head,
Little dimples in your cheek,
Little lips that never speak,
Little netting o'er you spread,
Little cheeks so rosy red,
Little hands that gently fold,
Your mamma sees and will not scold.

"RED SUNDAY."

SWIFTER than the wildest teal,
Shot the Russian's deadly steel.
Deeper than the ocean wild,
Was my sorrow, though I smiled.

The Toiler's Life

Louder than a cannon ball's
Was the sound of their maddened calls.
Far above the mountain's height
Was where the stars looked down that night.

Men, women and children were slain,
Because of Russia's greed for gain.
As martyrs of their cause they died
In honor neath Tyranny's tide.

Heroic stories the Russians told
And filled the Czar's coffers with gold.
In human blood that night they slept,
While all Zion, in sorrow, wept.

HOUR OF PRAYER.

O HOUR of prayer, thou art sweet to me
When my heart, from sin, is free;
When no sorrow in my soul abides
And thou hast subdued the surging tides.

O, hour of prayer, I called thee mine
When in sorrow I did repine.
I drank Salvation's rich perfume;
God freed my soul from Sorrow's gloom.

The Toiler's Life

O, hour of prayer, where'er I be,
I know His love will comfort me.
'Twill cheer me through each gloomy day
And drive the surging tides away.

O, hour of prayer, where'er I go,
I'll watch the crystal waters flow.
My soul, O Lord, is free from care,
Because I know the truth of prayer.

LONGFELLOW.

MOST worthy poet of thy realm,
Thou art master of the helm.
Drawing from the radiant sky,
Sweet sleep, thou canst never die.

The stars of Heaven shone in gold,
For of thy ascension they were told;
Then neath the silver moonlit sky,
Sleep, for thou canst never die.

The sun-kissed ocean rolls at ease,
For all nature, thou didst please,
And every flower neath the sky.
Sleep, then, for thou canst never die.

The Toiler's Life

Brooks thou didst fan with the wind.
In pureness of life, thou never sinned;
For showers of pearl fell from thy sky.
Sleep, then, for thou canst never die.

REPENTANCE.

O BEAUTIFUL scenes of the river,
Where waters, like crystal, flow,
I know God will deliver
My soul from sin and woe.

O, beautiful scenes of heaven,
Where every star doth shine,
I know my sins are forgiven,
So I will call Him mine.

O, beautiful scenes of the valleys,
Where the lilies grow,
I know His love in the alleys
Will reach the golden shore.

O, beautiful scenes of the mountain,
Where flowers grow in spring,
I'll drink of Mercy's fountain
And of His love, I'll sing.

The Toiler's Life

I CANNOT SING.

I CANNOT sing, because when a child,
My mother often hushed me.
The others she allowed to sing,
No matter what their melody.

And since I've grown to manhood
All music I applaud,
But have no voice for singing,
So I write my songs to God.

I have ears and know the measures,
And I'll write a song for you,
But the world must do the singing
Of my sonnets old and new.

Now tell me, world of music,
Why I cannot sing one song?
Is it because my mother hushed me
And laughed when I was wrong?

Although I can write music,
And tell when harmony's right,
I will never sing better than when
My song was hushed one night.

Fond mothers, always be careful;
Let the songs be poorly sung.
To hush the child is cruel;
Let it sing while it is young.

THREE ARTIFICIAL ROSES.

WE are just three roses stuck in a vase,
And we'd die from water, but live in a case.
We are quite pretty. If you touch us we nod.
And our petals are fastened to a long wire rod.

We care not for dewdrops to grow our seeds,
For the woman who owned us supplied our needs.
We know that our colors are white, pink and red,
And we are flowers that can never be fed.

We'll always be beautiful; this is no surprise;
And if you're not careful, we'll fool you.—Be wise.
We are innocent roses and know our place,
And our ancestry, you need not trace.

We were made by a woman, so perfect, who died,
And to make us fragrant how hard she tried!
We knew we were false, so that altered the case,
And now we are lonely in this old broken vase.

We were proud, even haughty, when she applied her last oil,
And were we not good roses, our colors would spoil.
We look like live roses, but are quite out of place,
And our looks would deceive you in this old broken vase.

We are always pretty—hold us up to view—
And always remember that the real are few.

THE BROKEN BEADS.

DREAM on, my sweet Carlotta;
Sleep, though thy brow is cold
In thy hand, I'll place it gently—
This cross of purest gold.

Sister Agnes gave it to me,
Many long years ago.
It hung to a string of ivy beads,
Where they went, I do not know.

Oh! yes, I do remember.
Brother threw them in the sand,
And all I ever found of them
Is the gold cross in my hand.

I know why those beads fell broken
And scattered over the street.
'Twas to remind us of our Saviour,
Who never knew defeat.

Sleep, then, my sweet Carlotta;
Heaven blessed thy cross of gold.
'Twill guide thee o'er the river,
Though thy lips in death are cold.

Carlotta was my younger sister,
Just a budding in the sun.
She carried the cross to Jesus,
For her work on earth was done.

STARS O'ER THE SEA.

ONE night a young lover
Went strolling by the sea;
The little stars were twinkling—
They seemed to ask his plea.

He glanced toward the heavens;
He heard the ocean's roar;
Then he began speaking
In a voice soft and low:

"Stars, little stars o'er the sea,
Why are you twinkling? Speak now to me.
I'll tell you my story, a story that's old.
Why are you silent? Please do not scold.

"I had a sweetheart not long ago;
Now she has left me—I love her so!
Where can I find her, just for a stroll?
This is my story. Can you console?

"Answer me gently. Do not refuse.
Shoot from your glory. Have you no news?
Up in the heavens, away in the sky,
Have you no message? Please tell me why.

"Tell me your story; whisper it free.
While you shine, will the ocean speak to me
Sometimes I wonder can it be true,
That when you are silent, the waves speak for you.

The Toiler's Life

"I think when you twinkle and shoot from the sky,
'Tis a heavenly message and my sweetheart's
good-bye.
Lovelorn and in sadness, friendless, no home,
Please will you guide me somewhere as I roam?

"I have told you my story,
Heartache's the cause;
I am one of the weary
Who has suffered loss."

UNFURL YOUR BANNERS.

MEN, if you must sing for us,
Let Freedom be your song;
Unfurl your banners to the wind,
For a Country's wrath is wrong.

Men, if you must play for us,
Let your harps be well atuned;
Unfurl your banners to the wind,
Every star tells of a wound.

Men, if you must pray for us,
Let your prayers be true and strong;
Unfurl your banners to the wind
And lead this mighty throng.

Men, if you must speak for us,
Let the words you speak be clear;
Unfurl your banners to the wind,
Every stripe shows forth a tear.

The Toiler's Life

Men, if you must fight for us,
  Let your blades of Liberty shine;
Unfurl your banners to the wind,
  Be Justice on every line.

Men, if you must die for us,
  Let your consciences be clear;
Unfurl your banners to the wind
  And foes you'll never fear.

A STORM AT SEA.

WHAT if the ocean toss us high,
  So we heed our captain's cry?
Every man upon the deck
Could not those raging billows check.

But in fear they sang with me,
"God rebuked the mighty sea."
Though its angry waters sighed,
The captain steered his ship with pride.

Winds and waves were of no avail,
He guided the vessel in that stormy gale.
Though the raging tempest the ship could part,
It did not weaken the captain's heart.

Every man stood at his post;
The storm subsided; she kept her coast.
Though she rose and fell, no anchor was cast,
The crew worked on till the tempest passed.

The Toiler's Life

TURN TO-DAY.

THERE will be parting of good and bad,
And rejoicing of Christians, with souls made glad.
Commingling with them, we will sing,
"Let us crown Him, Christ our King!"

You sinful ones who have left the fold
To accumulate your miserly gold,
Will be found wanting on that day,
Lacking a moment's time to pray.

Turn now, or you will be too late,
Like all who linger by and wait
To enjoy repose to them unknown.
Yes, wait until the Spirit's gone.

Turn, or the sun will hide from view,
And no wings protecting will shelter you.
Then choose well your path to-day,
For to-morrow's light is far away.

ELAINE.

OUR little brown-eyed darling came into this world
With the prettiest little face and hands, and nails of lovely pearl.

The Toiler's Life

She had the tiniest little head, where grew no hair at all.
We loved the queenly little thing and wondered why 'twas bald.

She smiled. We thought she'd be complete
When we could dress her for the street.
For our innocent little forget-me-not,
Then a budding, is now a tot.

I look at our darling, sweet Elaine,
And wish she would a babe remain;
But as time passes, she will grow
Proud and haughty. This we know.

Refined and cultured she will be
And a noble spirit in her eye you'll see.
We know she'll never cause us pain.
'Tis why we call this child Elaine.

THE PIPER.

A PIPER, who played his tunes for pay,
While no one knew what he did play,
Stood passing his worn cap all around,
Yet, from his pipe came not a sound.

I gave a dime, like others who paid,
But the old piper, for us ne'er played.

Suddenly falling to the ground,
He lifted his pipe, but made not a sound.

A crowd now gathered and stood to watch
The helpless piper, who cried in Scotch,
"Your nickels and dimes I will return,
And keep only that which I have earned."

To finish talking the piper tried;
But his breathing ceased and he quietly died.
We carried his form from the street where it lay,
And another piper came promptly to play.

IN THY CAST.

IN Thy cast, O God, who made me,
Image in Thy princely form,
Help me, while I live, to greet Thee
Calmly through the greater storm.

When morning's light dawns on me,
Thou, O God, who knoweth well
All the hopes I place upon Thee,
All my sinful thoughts dispel?

Help me in the early hour
Of restful stillness thus to be,—
Full of Thy nature, charm and power,
To lift my voice in prayer to Thee.

The Toiler's Life

HYACINTHS.

FEBRUARY'S snow is falling fast,
The sky is gray and overcast;
O'er the ground is spread a layer of white;
For snow has fallen all the night.

The blustering winds force it everywhere;
The merry sleigh-bells I plainly hear;
The houses are white from cellar to dome,
And no cows, from the meadows, come lowing
home.

Little hyacinths spring up to view.
I find no white, but the red and blue
Peep up from their snowy beds to say
That the white ones will not with them play.

I faintly catch their rare perfume,
The white ones a haughty air assume.
So proud are they in their robes, bedight,
They think their colors are none too bright.

On blustering days they will not show,
But cover their heads a-neath the snow.
While song birds gaily chirp and sing
Of the spotless white and callous king.

MY PETITE LADY.

MY lady, thou art fair and lovely,
Charming, graceful and petite;
With a fairy's gentle whisper,
I'd lay my roses at thy feet.

'Tis not folly now to tell thee
There's much pathos in thine eyes,
But perhaps I should not tell thee,
Why I admire thy dainty size.

Thou art like violets among roses;
I would pluck them one by one,
Hold them up to get their fragrance,
My violets nodding in the sun.

Then I'd place them on my bosom,
That they, their sweetness might dispel.
I'd admire their azure dresses.
Each violet true my love doth tell.

FRIENDSHIP.

WHO can tell the depth of friendship
When our sympathies are combined?
Who can tell of life's sublimeness
When, in another no fault we find?

The Toiler's Life

Though we met as only strangers,
And from our meeting friendship grew,
Yet from this can come no danger;
Our oldest friends were once quite new.

Tell me, then, the depth of sorrow;
Whisper it in simple mood;
Show me by majestic power,
Thy charms, and when thy soul is nude.

Tell me of the heart's surrender
When our lives are pure and sweet.
We are to-day, the same to-morrow;
Happy, then, our souls to greet.

Tell me in the happy hour,
While all Nature smiles with me,
'Tis but the gems we would discover.
Noble friends are friends like thee.

THE "RAG-PICKER MAN."

AN old rag-picker at early morn's hour,
Goes plodding along, though clouds may lower.
Unnoticed he moves through the crowded street;
Unmindful is he of snow and sleet.

He pushes a hand-cart that carries his ware;
His clothing is ragged, his shoes an old pair;

The Toiler's Life

His hands are hard and black from toil,
But cheerful is he and, to comrades, loyal.

Into the alley, then out on the street,
Inspecting each can that he chances to meet,
Diving down into them with his hand,
Unostentatious—this "rag-picker man."

He once was prosperous, with friends to choose—
Not garbed in rags or wearing odd shoes—
Handsome, positioned, neatly dressed,
In social touch with the rich and blessed.

Now when reverses and hardships come,
Driven from society, he lives in a slum.
Ask him the cause? His condition will tell.
And why does he gather rags to sell?

"I must have whiskey, occasionally bread;
One quenches my thirst, with the other I'm fed;
And when my work's finished, for whiskey I pay.
Have you any rags, any bottles to-day?"

His children at home are crying for bread;
Their father's a drunkard, their mother is dead.
For him she prayed, but could not understand
Why drink should have made him a "rag-picker man."

The Toiler's Life

GRANT AND LEE.

WHILE walking through the Hall of Fame,
A feeling of reverence o'er me came.
When illustrious names were shown to me,
I stopped to reread those of Grant and Lee.

Then holding up two nodding roses,
On which the morning's blush reposes,
I longed to place one on each mound,
With sympathy and love profound.

They are heroes lying in sacred sward,
Each has won his just reward.
As modern masters of their time,
The ladder of fame they both did climb.

In honored tombs they peacefully lay.
One wore the "Blue," the other the "Gray."
Men of perfect lives have been so few
That if my pen would prove me true,

Like Aristotle's, an authority I'd be,
And write of Grant,—no less of Lee.
They both believed that they were right,
So I will view them in that light.

Then on their tablets in the Hall of Fame
I laid my roses in His name,
To meet the rays of the morning's sun,
And grace the brow of each honored one.

OCTOBER'S BLAST.

OCTOBER, with your autumn blast
Of cold and chill winds, while you last,
And so little sunshine, while you remain,
Your blustering days are wrought in pain.

It is your nature and you have made
The leaves, once fresh and green, to fade.
The roses simply nod their heads,
For your ruling each one surely dreads.

The lilacs and lilies live in fear
That no longer they'll greet the dewdrop's tear.
The sweet magnolias will not last,
And take the dogwood now to task.

The honeysuckles try to make it plain
That in springtime they will bloom again;
While ivy to the laurels cling,—
No fear of winter, summer or spring.

The pansies, like the violets, know
That every season must come and go.
The tulips look up with surprise,
Chrysanthemums stand still—awed, wise.

The little hyacinths, with their varied smile,
Will remain through the winter just for style,

The Toiler's Life

Because the leaves have fallen low,
Throughout the land, by October's blow.

Some flowers might have lived and won
But for what your blustering winds have done.
The morning glories on hilltops climb
In simple colors,—all sublime.

The Indian creeper, erstwhile entwining
Around my window, is now repining.
They all have withered from the snow,
With nothing left, but death, to show.

The sparrow chirps to ask me why;
I echo back, "We all must die."
Falling leaves lie upon the grass.
They, too, are dying, all must "pass."

Now they are silent, and, like us, know
That they live for a season and then must go,
Covered in snow or by grassy sod,
Like an innocent flower, to meet our God.

LOOK NOT BACKWARD.

LOOK not backward into the past;
They're drones who linger to complain.
Move on and manfully meet the task;
Look forward, success thou wilt obtain.

The Toiler's Life

Look not backward; live to-day;
  Try to accomplish something new.
Work; be kind in what thou dost say
  To aid thy brother; he'll help thee, too.

Look not backward; consider the cost;
  So many have tried and failed
While wasting time, counting the lost,
  Brooding o'er errors that have prevailed.

Look not backward; thou wilt not be lost.
  Pray, and God will give thee light.
When thou art troubled or tempest-tossed,
  Smile and work with all thy might.

Look not backward; the night is dark;
  On to-morrow's sailing God's sun will shine.
Stand to the helm; master Failure's bark;
  Look forward and success is thine.

GOD'S MIGHTY WINDS.

BLOW! ye winds, with force so swiftly.
  Free and mighty clear the coast!
By the havoc you are causing,
  Brave and fearless men are lost.

How mystifying! Strong, defiant,
  From some corner none can see,
Your whistled music, sweet, confusing,
  To sailors on the briny sea.

The Toiler's Life

You have tossed the mighty ocean,
  Moving homeward, kissed the strand;
Climbing over hills and mountains,
  Brooks and rivers, you command.

Blow ye, then, with all your fury;
  Every ship must make for land.
That they have no time to tarry,
  All good sailors understand.

Your orders, given in the calm,
  "It's no one's business. Blow! I'll blow.
Now 'tis time to make alarm.
  I'll toss and batter every shore.

"I will whistle all day long.
  Fear not, then, the course I run;
To-morrow I'll not sing my song,
  But calmly smile with the radiant sun."

BASHFULNESS.

HOW strange, yet 'tis true,
That the world never knew
What to do in meeting or mating,
  When of love contemplating.
Free as the birds that soar through the air,
Was a youth in love with a maiden fair.
He loved her well, but when he tried
To implore this girl to become his bride,

The Toiler's Life

He thought of the birds that have wings to fly,
And asked, "Is it wrong for a lover to try?"
If he spoke to this charmer,
He thought he'd alarm her,
And feared she'd refuse
This rare exhibit of Cupid's views.
When he thought of the girl, who was high and above,
He cried, "Is it wrong for a lover to love?"
All of this happened, yet the girl never knew
That she had a lover so tender and true.
He simply loved in his youthful way,
And he loves that fair one until this day.

UNPLUMED KNIGHTS.

YE unplumed knights, fresh courage take,
And lay your armor down.
All true knights must thus obey
Or on them men will frown.

Disloyalty and conspiracy
Have brought upon you grief.
All knights who are armored
Must obey their chief.

'Tis not for me to now array
And flatter you who plod.

The Toiler's Life

Unplumed knights, you must obey,
  And carry your cause to God.

You, who are in number few,
  Sing not Retaliation's song.
To disobey your mighty chief,
  Unplumed knights, is wrong.

'Tis not for me to laud you on,
  Though valiant you in war;
I know the cause and you the laws,
  And fighting I abhor.

You need not ask for sympathy.
  If you were loyal when
The Colors faced the enemy,
  Unplumed knights, be men.

THE TOILER'S LIFE.

THE toiler's life is free from strife,
  And happiness must be his sphere;
For we are always loyal men
  Thinking not of wealth or peer.

Millions of men are in our band,
  For we are they who plod.
And while you count your untold wealth,
  We measure with the rod.

The Toiler's Life

We are toilers, and every day
  Wish that we could do more;
For every man in our toiling clan
  Knows the rich were, like us, poor.

In every avenue of trade,
  We'll help you work and plan,
And applaud those who success achieve.
  Cheer up, my working man!

We toil not simply for pay;
  Our motto is "work"—not "rest;"
For every man in our clan
  Would make this country best.

So we'll move on in Freedom's name,—
  We toilers, who must plod,—
And do the right, not for fame,
  But humanity and God.

THE MINER.

I HAVE never been in a coal mine,
  Nor seen the miners toil,
But I've read of the huge black diamond
  That lies beneath the soil.

I have read of the sturdy miner
  And know about his fight

The Toiler's Life

For an eight-hour day of labor.
How oft I've thought him right!

I have pitied the poor operator,
In his effort to mine the coal
With the indolent, faultfinding worker,
Who grudgingly wants control.

I have seen pictures of the breakers,
And known a few breaker boys
Who won fame and honor
'Twixt their hardships and their joys.

THE BEAUTIFUL.

O YE eastern skies at early morn,
Decked in your garment of gold,
How fast your colors change
While I your splendor behold!

Your golden light's so beautiful,
So purple and so blue,
When the beaming sun, resplendant,
Rises into my view.

For miles and miles away,
In your jewels all arrayed,
You move toward the western sky
In your heavenly parade.

The Toiler's Life

Like a king's battalion guard,
  You scatter your clouds apart.
Would that I could draw you,
  O heavens, for my art!

O golden ball of fire,
  Bursting forth to smile,
Cast your beautiful reflections
  In the firmament a while.

'Tis one heavenly shadow,
  Like some scrolled outline,
Shown in golden splendor,
  O God, and I call it Thine.

TELL ME, LITTLE FAIRY.

TELL me, little fairy,
  Why you'd steal away my muse;
I am so tired and weary,
  No word would I refuse.

Tell me of your travels
  Throughout the Mystic Lands;
And when you will unravel
  The cords that bind my hands.

Tell me, while you're soaring
  Through the cloudless sky,

The Toiler's Life

To stop the ocean's roaring,
  Why not let me try?

Tell me how you sparkle,
  Then into the waters go;
For why you will not tackle
  The wind, I do not know.

Tell me, will your arrow
  Pierce a weary soul like mine?
Because I am in sorrow,
  Why now your cords entwine?

Tell me why you're weaving
  Your silver cords in gold,
And I am now believing
  My world is growing old?

Tell me of the sun's ray,
  And why I cannot see
And sweetly sing at noonday.
  Why not you sing for me?

Tell me, little fairy,
  All about the silvery moon;
And while I am so weary,
  Play me some simple tune.

Tell me, oh! please tell me
  Why you're tying up my feet.

The Toiler's Life

Untie my hands and free me,
Then your work will be complete.

You draw your cords too tightly
And your music is too high.
I sing and pray now nightly,
And yet you bid me die.

THE HEBREW'S PLEA.

YE barons whom your masters pay
To trample Hebrews every day;
Ye haughty mob of idle men,
For royalty you use the pen.

With your dire deceit you put
Honest Hebrews under foot,
And plume yourselves like armored knights,
With no regard for human rights.

Away then with your baron caste!
Pray for your masters while they last!
Yon pealing bells ring out in gloom
O'er graves neath each dead baron's tomb.

Loudly in the senate hall,
In answer to your master's call,
Play away at human rights,
All ye haughty baron knights!

The Toiler's Life

As bidden, do your masters' will!
Pass, if you will, your tyrant's bill,
And persecute the loyal Jews,
For such are your vile masters' views.

Freely with your bayonets slash
Our souls, to you, no more than trash,
Piled up, like a living mass,
By barons of your tyrant class.

Pity! Why, the word we scorn!
Curse not the day that we were born;
God is leader of our race,
O tyrants in your royal place.

Stains of murder are on your head,
While we starve for want of bread.
Give us freedom or we die
Stamping out a tyrant's lie!

REMORSE.

THE day is dying and almost gone;
It has rained unabated since early morn.
With no sunshine in the sky,
The dark gray clouds are moving high.

I am so weary in my vacant home
With none to cheer me in my gloom.

The Toiler's Life

I try to sing, but instead I weep,
Remorse, into my soul, doth creep,

I am as sad as the day is long,
Yet if I could hear one solemn song,
'Twould cheer this saddened heart of mine
And fill my soul with bright sunshine.

No souls but those that love doth cross,
Can pity when I feel remorse,
When all around me seems so drear
And sorrow's burden I must wear.

Though I say it rained till eve,
Not even sunshine would relieve
My fevered brain of its remorse.
I have loved and suffered loss.

WINE.

DEAR old wine!
All my trials you would entwine.
All my faults are left behind,
Buried deep, and for all time,
By you, my solace, dear old wine.
Fermenting in a bottle green,
So much joy from you I've seen.
From you, iced cold,—bottle in hand,
I drew the cork, then read the brand.

The Toiler's Life

I poured you sparkling into my glass,
And drank to drown the saddened past.
You'll bring good cheer to any man
Who drinks and drinks, but understands
Your exquisite taste and old, old brand.
Sparkle, then, at my command!
I'll sip you slowly. Tint not my face!
In all my sorrow, who'd take your place?
So now I drink and call you mine
One ice-cold bottle of dear old wine.

THE CHILD'S DEATH.

WHY doth Thou call so early?
So little time giveth Thou me.
All of Thy beautiful workmanship,
Why can't I live to see?

Why doth Thou call so early
A soul so innocent?
I love Thine earthly glory;
My life is so content.

Why doth Thou call so early
A budding rose so tame?
Why not await its blooming
And beauty in Thy name?

Why doth Thou call so early
Me from childhood's play?

The Toiler's Life

Thy night hath brought no sorrow.
  Pray let me live one day.

Why doth Thou call so early
  My soul to trials unknown,
From those who love me dearly,
  Causing their hearts to mourn?

Why doth Thou call so early?
  Let me draw from Thee one breath,
That I might taste of sorrow,
  Thou Heavenly Reaper, Death.

Why do I call so early?
  Child, slumber; sweet thy sleep;
For what thy Master soweth,
  Thy Master will surely reap.

The child then whispered gently,
  "Ah ne'er would I remain.
Death cometh now so sweetly.
  Hallowed be Thy name."

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

ALONE I stood by the sad, sad sea,
  Flowing in madness toward me,
Scattering on shore its snow-white foam,
Singing its song of "Home, Sweet Home."

The Toiler's Life

With no sign of sun in the clouded sky,
The heavy mists, round me did fly.
All on land to be seen was foamy white,
For no human being was in sight.

Far out on the water was faintly seen
A white-winged ship like an ocean queen.
Through the fog no other form was clear,
But the ocean's roaring I could hear.

Slowly I sauntered on the strand
And heard a strain from the musical sand.
I walked away to a pile of chrome,
And the sea-sand echoed, "Home, Sweet Home."

I crushed the pebbles neath my feet,
And as I walked they seemed to repeat
The sad old song where'er I'd roam,
That musical marvel, "Home, Sweet Home."

I tried to discover the reason why,
But the ocean grave continued to sigh.
With a mighty voice, like the gods' of Rome,
Its waves sang the theme of "Home, Sweet Home."

Here and there lay weeds on the beach
That seemed to say, in their sad speech,
To the tossing billows as I did roam,
"Oh back, take me back to 'Home, Sweet Home,'"

The Toiler's Life

As I neared some jetties covered with moss
And watched the white-caps angrily toss
Upon the beach their snow-white foam,
I longed to be in my own "sweet home."

JOHN MILTON.

MOST noted poet of thy clime,
Would that I had art to write
Thy name into some charming rhyme.

How charming thy lines in Latin and Greek.
Such beautiful lyrics, thou didst write
When thy eyesight was growing weak.

Kings and princes lauded thee on,
For wonderful poets like thee
Are not made, but born.

O master poet, when thou went blind,
'Twas as Paradise Lost
To such an ingenuous mind.

Sleep, noble poet, in St. Giles Cripplegate,
Where angels are guarding thy sacred tomb,
For masters like thee can never be late.

Christ's eternal happiness is free,
And the merciful Father of all will restore
Life everlasting and eyesight to thee.

WHO IS KING?

A LARK flew away and chirped in its flight.
To a moping owl perched
On a tree's towering height.

He listened intently and wished he could sing,
Then screeched with his might,
"I know I am king!"

Just then a gay sparrow hopped under the tree,
Feeding on insects
Where flowers were free,

Burying his little bill fast in the earth,
The owl pounced upon him
Screeching, "This is my berth"!

You are a sparrow, then why not sing?
Why enter my presence?
You know I am king!"

The innocent sparrow in captivity died,
And the owl grew haughty,
In his kingdom, with pride.

But from a high mountain where all birds sing,
An eagle came down
And devoured the king.

The Toiler's Life

THE SPINNER.

A SPINNER was spinning in the sun,
While a fly around him played
And seemed to be enjoying the fun,
The web maker, for him, made.

This spinner was a spider who wanted a meal,
So he spun and lured in the fly.
This web maker heard not the fly's appeal,
And to escape 'twas no use to try.

The spinner, to make sure, rewound every bar,
Then sprang on the imprisoned fly.
The center of his web was a perfect formed star,
And caught every fly that went by.

It is not they who soar, but they who spin,
Who are found weaving perfect formed stars;
And like the spider, who lured the fly in,
They'll wind for you prison bars.

LET US SING.

LET us sing, my friends, the anthem
And watch the coming of New Year.
Let our songs of praise be joyful
And drive away trials and care.

The Toiler's Life

Let us sing, my friends and brothers,
'Twill gladden the soul of every man.
Put words to the music as you play
And your hearts in the songs as best you can.

Then let us sing, my friends and masters,
The pledge of liberty, let us sing,
As with pleasure we give freely
A part of all New Year doth bring.

Sing happy New Year loud and clear;
Let us sing harmoniously now;
Let us turn from paths forbidden
And sacred keep each New Year vow.

MY SWEET ELAINE.

MY sweet Elaine, how well I love thee;
Charmeth thou the strongest mind.
Within the realm of Love, I greet thee;
Dear Elaine, be not unkind.

Toss thy head like a lovely bower
Or some perfect nodding rose,
And intently listen to thy lover.
Tell me where thy spirit goes.

Well you loved me, little charmer,
When o'er fields we went to school;

The Toiler's Life

When we used to gather flowers
  And our teachers tried to fool.

Why not listen to me, darling,
  With your hazel eyes so true?
Ever since our happy schooldays
  I have lived to love but you.

I have waited all these summers,
  For your bud perfumed the air.
Will you love me, Elaine darling?
  Hearest thou my humble prayer?

Tell me not that it is folly;
  I see the stars in the heavens shine;
And the madly flowing ocean
  Tells me, love, that you are mine.

THE TAVERN CHILD.

THE snow was falling on a moonlight night,
And the town was covered with a mantle of white;
But a woman, half clad, cold and sore,
Kept peeping in at a tavern door.
Hearing clink of glasses, in she ran,
And stood beside a drunken man,
Begging him, for the sake of their child,
To cease commingling with the vile,

Who stood around a red-hot stove,
And with argument her condition tried to prove.
They stood sneering as they gazed
With laughter, and were much amazed
At what they considered a vulgar show,
While into their glasses some cheap wine did pour.
Unnoticed by the crowd who jeered,
The woman kept pleading with a man who peered
Into his glass to see,
And asked, "Is there no drink for me?"
The woman, who is burdened down with care,
Has in her eye a silent tear.
Now she with her apron quickly dries
Her pretty blue, but half-opened eyes;
When close upon the scene did come
One unruly tavern bum,
Who loudly laughed and with good cheer
Walked up to the bar, then ordered beer.
"Come, fellows, join; let's take a drink."
The woman stood silent and began to think
Of her child at home who needed care,
And thought perhaps she'd take the beer
To drown—as she thought—Sorrow's wound.
The man began to hum a tune;
Half crazed by a cheap grade of wine,
At his broken "gallowses" he was tying.
Now the woman with gentle hand
Placed it on the drunken man.
"It is her husband," some one said.
"Woman, why art thou not home in bed?"

The Toiler's Life

"Kind sir, this is my husband Joe.
He has caused my bitterest tears to flow.
We have a child at home, and this man,
Who knows that our little Dan
Has had no food this entire day,
Just at noon received his pay.
I have come to ask of him some aid.
Yet of him I am afraid.
He spends his entire pay for rum
To pacify some tavern bum."
Every man stopped drinking, opened wide his eyes
And stood as if stunned, so great was his surprise
That Joe should treat his wife and "chile"
So brutal in her greatest trial.
"Come, fellows," said he who had ordered beer,
As he saw the woman's falling tear,
"We'll take not another drink to-night.
This woman must be treated right,
And what we now would spend for beer
Let's give this woman for son and heir."
The keeper—now in dismay—
The tavern bum forgot to pay.
While Joe was trying to sober up,
Each man left the tavern, quite abrupt.
The woman asked to have brought a chair,
Still holding her glass without touching the beer.
Joe, with the help of tavern man,
Held up the woman, who could hardly stand.
Her sufferings had now become intense.
"Rush for the doctor! bring him hence!

The Toiler's Life

Call my wife, Susan Ann!
To come and lend a helping hand."
Thus the tavern keeper cried,
This scene arousing his manly pride.
Now Ann came rushing in the place,
Exclaiming, "Oh, my, what a disgrace
To keep this drunken woman here."
But she has never touched the beer.
Upon the counter sits her glass,
Filled to the brim with the foaming mass.
They laid her on a couch near by;
She closed her eyes and heaved a sigh.
"Will you please call my husband Joe?
Ask him why does he treat me so
Cruel and leaves me without food?
I, his wife, am true and good,
But I cannot here remain;
I'm having such an awful pain."
Then rushing in through the door
Came the doctor with drunken Joe.
The doctor, taking off his glove
And warming his hand by the stove,
Asked, "Who brought this woman here?"
"We know not—see her husband there."
He gave her tablets from his grip,
And with some water moistened her lip.
"Close the door; pull down the blind,"
Was what the doctor had in mind.
With gentle hand he stroked her brow,
And all that were silent are crying now—

A son and heir of this drunken man.
To cart them off was now their plan.
"Pity me, but O God! my child!
Born in a tavern, but undefiled.
Lay him gently on my breast."
Joe looked sober and much distressed.
He watched his pure and loyal wife,
And prayed that God would spare her life.
Kneeling beside the couch, he swore
To drink of the flowing bowl no more.
Moving his hands from his tired eyes,
The doctor looked up in surprise
At the tavern keeper and his Ann.
They all knew Joe to be a man,
Who would spend all his earnings for beer,
And at his wife he'd often swear.
She was a willowy, gentle girl;
Just a few years she wore the loveliest curl.
All her true friends she forsook
And this common roue for a husband took,
Who, with ruffians at this tavern planned
The winning of this maiden's hand.
In the place where this scheme was laid, that won,
Now is born, to them, a second son.
Wrapped in a common homespun sheet,
No kind hands did this child greet.
As I think of its little shiny eyes,
The mother's love is no surprise.
Gazing innocently into space,
He seemed to view some distant place.

The Toiler's Life

The mother drew him to her breast
And wrapped him in her ragged dress.
An ambulance, with doleful ring,
Having no pity for this human thing,
Drew up in front of the tavern door.
This wagon was built for the suffering poor.
Under cover this snowy night
Two doctors, who were garbed in white,
Brought in a stretcher and on it did place
The child and its mother, who now must face
The chilling wind from the northern sky,
While the man goes on. Please tell me why?
He knows no sorrow, and drinks till morn;
Yet in a tavern his child is born.
And with the sadness of its birth,
The child shows signs of human worth.
The innocent is never to be blamed
Who is rushed into this world with or without shame.
In tavern or hospital hall,
There is a handwriting on the wall,
Telling what this child shall be,
Born in a land of Liberty.
"Mother and child both doing well."
The doctors to all this story tell.
"No more question? Nothing more to say?
They must leave to-morrow; 'tis the ninth day."
Arranging as best she could
Her clothing, none of it too good,
She is told by the nurse to depart:
Weak and suffering pains through her body dart.

The Toiler's Life

Dizzied by headache, almost blind,
No friend or encouragement could she find.
Many scorned her, while some turned away;
Others laughed; some vile things did say.
A woman, passing, drew her skirt,
But let it drag through slush and dirt.
At last this sufferer reached her home,
And found Dan in a place of gloom,
Emaciated, without fire or fare;
Some poor old woman did for him care.
The mother fell upon her knees,
To lay the baby down with ease,
And prayed God to be good and kind
To Joe, who must be weak of mind.
Loudly some one rapped on the door;
The mother fell in a faint on the floor,
And on her face she wore a smile:
Death had claimed them both, mother and "chile."
When Joe came into this lonely place,
Drunk and reddened in the face.
Dan was lying on his mother's lap,
Trying to arouse her, when a slap
His father gave him, with an angry look.
With his oaths, the house he fairly shook;
And, going out, this drunken man
Had murdered his son, our little Dan.
Rushing out into the street,
He fell in a squalor of slush and sleet.
Frozen stiff this drunkard lay,
By the curse of drink now taken away.

MY FRIEND WILLIAM WHITE.

WELL, my good and genial host,
Of friends like thee I can ever boast.
A little glass of wine quite clear
So oft hath brought to us good cheer,
And given my appetite much zest.
Then, too, your luncheons are the best.
While you stopped to tell a joke,
I filled my pipe for a good smoke.

And then until the dead of night
I'd sit and chat in spirits bright.
The lamp would burn, quite short the wick,
And the good old clock refused to tick
When we ate our bread with butter spread,
Then left the room and went to bed.

CUPID'S GAME.

CUPID, in a city of love,
With wings of purest gold,
Carried his arrows on his back,
To play his game of old.

He thought of scheming with the sun,
That was rising unusually late,
And so he bent his golden bow
To send his arrows straight.

The Toiler's Life

Into the hearts of the fairest flowers,—
The daisies that around him grew,
Aided by the sun's bright rays,—
Was where some arrows flew.

In an old oak, moss laden,
Was perched a cooing dove.
One arrow scarcely missed it,
Then pierced two hearts of Love.

The sun became disgusted
With this arrow as it fell.
The dove now calmly lighted,
And drank from an open well.

Then, lifting up his little bill,
Quietly he flew away,
And, passing two lovers in an "auto,"
Told them of Cupid's play.

So now they planned to stop him
And cut his golden wings,
But he aimed his arrows at them,
And unfastened the "auto's" springs.

It fell into the daisy field,
And there the auto laid.
As Cupid drew another bow,
This game of love was played.

The Toiler's Life

WAIT NOT FOR TO-MORROW.

WAIT not for to-morrow; live well to-day;
For to-morrow may find you far, far away

Wait not for to-morrow; to-day we will sing;
For to-morrow to us much sorrow may bring.

Wait not for to-morrow; have then no fears;
For to-morrow may dry your bitter tears.

Wait not for to-morrow; let us not sigh;
For to-morrow we may perish and die.

THE DYING WORLD.

I listened to the trumpeter's horn,
  And watched the bright sun rising
O'er the face of the newly born,
  O God, in love surprising.

I watched the grass-blades wet with dew,
  As drops on leaves were sparkling;
When the noonday sun stood out to view,
  All the world was larking.

I stood upon a crumbling hill
  And watched the sunset falling;
A mocking-bird sending forth his thrill
  To the cows in meadows was calling.

The Toiler's Life

I examined a huge crumbling rock,
  And listened to the ocean sighing,
While in the tower the old town-clock
  Ticked away the souls now dying.

High up on the mountain top
  A hawk was peacefully soaring;
The sea beneath refused to stop
  Its dull but turbulent roaring.

I caught a fragrance pure and sweet,
  And in grief, on a rock, sat crying;
I alone the Heavens did greet
  While all the world was dying.

"THE CHILD OF NIGHT."

LIFT up thine eyes, O "Child of Night,"
  And pray until the morning's light
Shall fall upon thy queenly gaze,
Until thy heart is all ablaze
In meekness for thy Master's love.
His holy Spirit, like a dove,
Will bring rejoicing to thy soul,
The fullest measure,—not in part, but whole.

Let not this dove of Mercy depart
Until His love shall fill thy heart.

The Toiler's Life

His grace divine, thou must fairly snatch,
For thou canst not His wisdom match.
Through pearly gates, His children fly,
Then we must pray on,—you and I.
It is not for words we lack.
Confess thy sins; hold them not back.

If thou wouldst drink freely of His grace,
All thy sins, thou must surely face;
Count them one by one with fear,
And for each one drop a silent tear.
Lose not His favor; 'twould cause thee pain,
And thrust thee into sin again.
See! the darkness hath turned to light.
Thou hath thy faith, O "Child of Night."

TRUTH.

MEN, heed the faintest call,
And on to duty plod.
Be truthful, if you fall
Under the rod.

Loyal you must be
In whate'er you plan.
Truth is the crowning link
'Twixt man and man.

The Toiler's Life

Well may you live at ease
When clouds abound,
For in the rough-hued shells,
Rare pearls are found.

As you from childhood grow
Up into youth,
Know that he who'd be a man,
First must learn truth.

A DAY DREAM.

ONE day, as I sat dreaming
Alone by the angry sea,
A strange and weird feeling
Came surging over me.

I closed my eyes, for its sweetness
Pregnated my being through;
But the image, that came before me,
Was not of God, my love, but you.

Frightened, I grew, at its vastness,
And thought of the depth of the sea.
Weary I was with longing
When your face was shown to me.

When the mystery vanished
I raised my eyes above,
And thought that greater than ocean's
Was the depth of a woman's love.

THE SPARROW AND THE WIND.

A LITTLE sparrow, in a storm,
Tried to sail against the wind,
When. in despair, he chirped aloud,
"In stopping me you've sinned."

In yon tower, where he nestled,
Lived his little mate.
He tried to reach her in his flight,
For she, for him, did wait.

The strong wind blew the tower down.
He thought his little mate was killed,
But when he found that she had flown,
With joy his heart was filled.

CHRISTMAS.

LET all the world rejoice to see
In every home a Christmas tree,
And let the chiming bells ring out
"Merry Christmas" the land throughout.

Over hills, across the sea
And throughout the "Land of Liberty"
Let the clarion sound his horn
To tell the world that Christ is born.

The Toiler's Life

Joyously followed the golden star,
Wise men who journeyed from afar.
Since then the curfew rings her chime
To tell the world 'tis Christmas time.

The little children laugh and play
On this, our happy Christmas day,
Our homes, a gala air, assume
As we catch the holly's rich perfume.

We then will let all nations hear
Our songs of praises everywhere.
We'll help the poor and to them bring
Glad tidings of our Christ and King.

Ring "Merry Christmas" o'er the world,
All nations' banners are unfurled.
Let all the world sing Christmas morn,
For then the holy Christ was born.

Near the manger where He lay
The wise men stopped to sing and pray.
Now all the fields, once brown and trite,
Have taken on a mantle white.

The sleighs tell us of Christmas joys
And bring our children many toys.
Everywhere they sing and cheer,
And curfew's ring is sweet and clear.

The Toiler's Life

WHY GROW OLD?

WHY grow old? Why fret and pine,
Because thy locks are turning gray?
Look not back on Nature's time,
If wrinkles on thy warm brow play.

Why grow old? Thy charms remain,
If thy body doth rack with pain.
It is thy soul that's never old,
But always sweet and will remain.

Why grow old? Thou canst laugh and smile,
And every flower thou canst prize.
Then thou must find some frolicking time,
Though feeble be thine eyes.

Why grow old? But yesterday
'Twas spring and not the winter's snow.
'Tis not the aging or the time.
We live in youth and simply grow.

THE NIGHT OF DESPAIR.

ERE the evening twilight's falling,
Sleep my eyes doth overcast;
For my tired brain is calling
The darkness that is falling fast.

The Toiler's Life

My weary eyes in slumber
  Blur the leaves of printer's art,
And I forget the page's number
  In my book, and where to start.

The lamp that's burning dimly
  Sends forth a flickering light,
But my tired fingers limply
  Hold the book all night.

'Tis in the dead of winter
  When I sit in the old arm chair
Until the light grows fainter,
  Then I kneel to God in prayer.

When I awake I am in sorrow
  As I was on yesterday,
Yet I hope that my to-morrow
  Will drive Despair away.

WE MUST DIE.

WE come into this sorrowful world
  And are shown, each one, our places;
Then grow up to manhood's age
  To lose our childhood graces.

We plod along through this grave world,
  And to soar, how hard we try;
When successful, we quickly reach
  The hour when we must die.

THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

THE wind is whistling all around,
But it cannot get at me.
It has ruffled the sandy beach
And roughened the dark gray sea.

Sand whirls and twirls here and there,
Shaping circle, curve and arch;
The wind blows a swift and stormy gale.
I'm sure it's the month of March.

Now it whistles its dismal song,
Telling of the approaching King
April, who will follow on.
I'm sure we'll then have spring.

THE IRON HAND.

MY smiles are full disguise. How can it be
That smiling hath no charms for me?
I gaze, then wish that I was blind,
When others have no fault to find.
I spoke when told "It is the way
To merely lisp out what you say."
I feel the scourge of the "Iron Hand."
Is this the thing that God hath planned?
The ocean in its angry mood
Hath given me some thought for food.
If I could lisp one word a day,
I'd tell the ocean what to say;

The Toiler's Life

Perhaps through it our souls defend
In language known to wiser men.
So I, into the heavens, did look,
And the grandest observation took
Of a little group of silent stars,
And thought that one of them was Mars.
I looked the moon straight in the face
And prayed repeatedly for grace
To see the light through the clouded skies—
A gaze too strong for human eyes.
I smiled—'twas only makebelief,—
Compelled to be a smiling thief.
And so it is with men who rule.
They brand a man as mortal's fool.
How could I smile, I thought to-day,
When I cared not for time to play?
So I kept thinking all the while,
How could any mortal smile,
Who had true eyes to see
This "Iron Hand" so firm on me?
And so I tried some words to lisp
Of happiness; and how was this,
That I, who am a mortal man,
Could smile at this, the "Iron Hand?"
At every turn this hand I see,
Causing untold misery
To an humble class of men,
Who, like the stars, are silent when
The ocean breaks upon the shores;
What's the language, no one knows.

The Toiler's Life

It is surging and rolling all day long:
No one's so wise who knows its song.
With some laughter, once in a while,
I'm forced, from injury, to smile.
Why should I not inhale the air
And think, as others, sweet and clear?
I would smile and with the innocent flee,
But that "Iron Hand" is still on me.
Honest toilers have no place
In this march of the human race;
And yet along this line I move
Some insincerity thus to prove—
That I was one of the group of stars
Living in the brightness of our Mars.
I took one long breath and did sigh;
I wish that I could tell you why.
Look now! That hand is still on me—
The "Iron Hand." Why can't you see?
If it could only stop my breath
And to my lips give silent death,
This hand might rule in Freedom's land
And with its vengeance all men brand.
What is this burning in my soul?
Think not I am a common scold;
It takes much courage here to move.
With an equal chance, to you I'll prove
There's nothing honest in a liar's time,
Yet robbers' lives have been made sublime.
There's nothing modest in a lawyer's fee.
If I could only a demon be,

The Toiler's Life

I'd strike the "Iron Hand" you see
Snarling, jabbing, insulting me.
A heritage,—yes, while it lasts,—
Keeps scourging men of lowly castes.
Patiently I the insult took
And frowned a smile,—yes, such a look,—
Forced to smile by the "Iron Hand,"
The oppressor of the toiling man,
A meaning which they all mistook.
If I could only write a book,
I'd pity you, "Land of the Free."
Pray take your "Iron Hand" off me
And let me live, or tell me why
I cannot, like all others, try
To breathe and think and live at ease,
My manly effort to appease.
If I were wise enough to scheme,
This "Iron Hand" I would redeem;
In estimation place it high,
This "Iron Hand" so prone to lie.
My innocence you would disprove,
And your hypocrisy approve.
Some more oppression to install:
You say for some, why not for all?
You make your laws to suit the few,
Whom you say are wise—the ones you knew—
Initiating them with fifes and drums,
While honest toilers lie in slums,
And drink in taverns here and there,
Filling their empty stomachs with beer.

The Toiler's Life

With swaying bodies they homeward go
With demons' eyes. Who made it so?
The "Iron Hand" its coffers fills,
While honest toilers pay the bills.
Why not these toilers, to the man,
Cease worshiping this "Iron Hand?"
When working find some time to say,
"Keep that 'Iron Hand' at bay?"
O Wisdom, open wide thine eyes,
To every man a mortal prize.
Then teach the hand less games to play,
And let it find more time to pray.
Of course while these conditions last,
'Twill help recall the saddened past.
It matters not what some will say,
Some men live, but for one day,
And climb the ladder from the ground;
When midway wonder why 'tis round.
The steps, they claim, should all be square.
"I cannot climb the rounds," they swear.
Think not of the steps, O man,
Or you'd some other ladder plan
To reach the top, when in despair,
The "Iron Hand" would meet you there
To insult you, my toiling "chile."
'Tis why I'm saddest when I smile.
Your misery to me doth sting.
You may whistle, dance or sing,
But I will stop and think a while,
And wonder how and why you smile.

The Toiler's Life

MY SAINTED BRIDE.

WHAT if I should tell you a story true
Of a rose in blooming time,
That was bent by the weight of drops of dew
And perished ere I called it mine?
It kissed the earth that gave it birth,
Crushed by one heavenly shower,
Yet it retained its fragrance true
And died in its most welcome hour.

So it was with my fondest love,
Whom I had made my bride.
She, in her most welcome hour,
Smiled with me and died.
How we walked and talked of pleasure,
In fields where roses bloomed;
And wondered at their beauty and fragrance
With which the atmosphere was perfumed.

We planned a life of so much happiness
In a cottage where did climb,
The star-shaped leaves of ivy
Displaying their green freshness at all times;
Where every flower seemed to know us,
Every rose gave its graceful nod,
And chrysanthemums bowed in golden cluster
As we passed through our fragrant yard.

Ah, but these were only visions.
Their true story, they would hide

The Toiler's Life

Under cover of the moonlight
As the sainted Martha became my bride.
On roses that were then so fragrant
The moon did brightly shine.
Chrysanthemums in gold reigned supremely
When our wedding bells did chime.

How our cozy home was crowded
And our friends so fondly cheered,
Then the music sounded sweetly
As my sainted bride appeared.
O, the sea of happy faces
When the minister asked my bride,
"Wilt thou ever love and cherish
This man as the Good Book doth provide?"

With sweetest smiles she gently answered,
"A promise given shall be true."
Then tenderly he asked this question:
"Well, brother, what say you?"
I too promised to love and hold her.
This woman I promised to protect;
And close beside me I beheld her—
My charming lady, most perfect.

When the sky was clear, without a tear,
And the moon calmly witnessed my plight,
On flowery beds my sacred pledge
I gave to her that April night.

The Toiler's Life

How happy was I, because I'd won
A gem so sparkling and true.
And yet before the morrow's sun
My happiness fell from view.

The wintry blast and biting frost
Cared not for the pledge of spring,
Though the moon came out and brightly shone
On the little birds as they did sing
Their sweetest notes, from musical throats
Imitating some death knell.
In the cold and chilling winds
Of some sorrow they would tell.

The moon, who understood the song,
Thought to disappoint was always wrong,
So she hid her face in a dark gray cloud,
To hush the warbler's saddened song.
'Twas early dawn; the stars were gone,
And the dazzling sun now took their place.
My saddened plight seemed to him all right,
For Death was posing in his face.

As morning passed so chill and fast,
And hushed the cruel warbler's breath,
My love made one great sacrifice
And sealed her sainted lips in death.
How disappointing and sad it seemed
That sun and moon from me should hide
To stop the cruel warbler's breath
And take my Martha from my side.

The Toiler's Life

Now even the lilies nod their heads
  As in silence every rose doth show
And sigh in sympathy sincere.
  Yet in my sorrow I must live and grow
Nearer to that noble soul
  Who bravely crossed the raging sea
And swiftly to the heavens did fly,
  Where anxiously she waits for me.

THE TRAMP.

A POOR old tramp in a garment of rags
  Sauntered through a village one day,
And lazily watched some children
  Who gaily sang while at play.

The old tramp's heart was happy,
  Though he was clothed in rags.
In one hand he carried a tin can,
  In the other a few worthless tags.

On his nose were blotches,
  In color a crimson red;
His face was pale and wan,
  Like those of men poorly fed.

The happy children laughed
  As this beggar passed them by;
And to shun their inquiring gaze
  Vainly he did try.

The Toiler's Life

Far out of the little village
The beggar lay down to sleep
In the hollow of a huge tree,
Where reptiles round him did creep.

He lay and watched the crescent moon,
To note its rise and fall,
Then slept until at sunrise,
He heard the robin's call.

Far o'er the hills of that village,
When a little child, he played
And romped in the dew-kissed meadow
Where now his body was laid.

He sadly thought of his parents,
Who, to heaven, had gone,
And wondered why it was
That he should linger on.

He envied the birds that round him flew,
And thought of his childhood home.
When morning's light fell on his brow
Again he began to roam.

Following footpaths along the hills,
He listened to a croaking toad;
Then smiled as the brilliant rays of sun
Pointed out to him a lonely road.

The Toiler's Life

He stopped at a clear and rippling brook
And knelt to quench his thirst.
He thought his lot was hard enough
And hoped he'd reached his worst.

When refreshed, he plodded along,—
This knight of the darkened road,
Who cared not for storm or wind,
For sleep or his abode.

He would have been a prosperous man
Had he not adopted drink
On the invitation of a friend
Who never stopped to think.

Oh, the harm that drink will do
To upset a toiler's plan!
If it were never distilled,
'Twould not have cursed this man.

REMEMBER.

WHEN affection's bonds have freed you,
And your heart will have grown cold,
Remember, oh! remember how you loved me in days of old.

When affection's bonds have freed you,
And you have feeble grown,
Remember, oh! remember that once you were my own.

The Toiler's Life

When affection's bonds have freed you,
And you can scarcely see,
Remember, oh! remember that those bonds are holding me.

ENVY NOT.

IN this world of human progress,
Envy not the royal or rich,
But go forward; do thy duty;
Laud men who have shunned the ditch.

In this world of human progress,
Help the lowly and the poor;
Then go forward; do thy duty;
For Death will enter every door.

THE STROCLER.

THE old steamer glides on the ocean,
Bearing her passengers over the sea.
Captain and officers are held in admiration,
But no one hear's the strocler's plea.

Officers mess and cheer the captain,
Passengers join in voices free,
But no one thinks of the strocler
Out on the dark gray sea.

The Toiler's Life

HOPE.

MAY never condition present
Nor that which is to come
Force Hatred in my Distress,
But that God wills, Hope is for the best.
May never Envy creep into my soul
To despise them who are rich or royal,
But that God wills, I'll not hate or rebel,
For Hope is my song and all is well.

OUR PLEA.

PACIFY, O God, the ambitions of the strong;
Purify their hearts that they do no wrong;
Perfect their lives and make them sublime;
Protect the humble and weak of our time.
Power give unto those who are loyal to Thee;
Peace unto all whom Thou hast set free;
Proof of Thy great and untiring devotion;
Palsy to those of a murderous notion.

THE LETTER.

I LOVED my art, but loved you better;
I knew the word, but you the letter,
I spoke the words that enslaved me.
You answered "Yes" and heard my plea.

The Toiler's Life

I thought you were true and revealed it,
Because 'twas hard to conceal it.
Now you've grown cold and know me better,
I love my art and you your letter.

TOUSSAINT L'OVERTURE.

IN seventeen hundred and forty-three,
When pirates ruled the roaring sea,
And barons re-echoed their haughty boasts,
Knighthood stood in danger along the coasts.

On every star that decked the sky
Princes frowned as they did try
To force them from the heavens' wall,
That on their crowns they all might fall.

In the course of God's allotted time
Men's lives all would be made sublime.
And with the heads of princely men,
Others' lives He would defend.

Thus from man's life estate,
One of Africa's sons He'd now make great.
Men wondered at the beauteous sky
As the golden rays fell on Haiti.

On Cape Francis, one glorious morn,
Toussaint L'Overture was born.

The Toiler's Life

Unlettered and with blood unmixed,
At the birth of Napoleon he was twenty-six.

E'en then he tried to read and write,
And cherished the freedom of black and white.
When at the age of forty-eight,
The name of Napoleon, to men, was great.

Though enslaved at De Libertat,
He was a man "for a' that."
So Toussaint thought himself to blame
For cower at Napoleon's name.

Now as a hero he would lead,
And proclaim his people freed
From the tyrant's awful lash
And his country's enemies, whom he'd thrash.

In seventeen hundred and ninety-one
The work of our martyr had begun,
And in seventeen hundred and ninety-three
Toussaint proclaimed all Haiti free.

At the seizure of Port Au Prince,
Napoleon, he did convince,
Of the fall of Port De La Paix.
Then Toussaint rescued Leavenx.

In seventeen hundred and ninety-six
The nation of Haiti lived betwixt

The Toiler's Life

Freedom and Napoleon's hourly scorn,
Who cursed the day Toussaint was born.

Toussaint laid aside Andre Rigaud,
And all great men, him now did laud.
Then with firmness and moderation
Haiti became an independent nation.

Napoleon, with his treachery,
Unwilling to set the Haitians free,
Sent Leclerc on a mission, like a teal,
To execute a villainous deal.

He took our hero to a foreign land,
As the great Napoleon had planned,
And in the Chateau of Joux, he died,
In the height of his reign and pride.

Let us honor, then, the name
Of Toussaint L'Overture, who won fame,
And to our children this story tell,
For all Haiti wept when their ruler fell.

THE SNOW STORM.

SNOW is flying through the air
And swiftly drifting here and there,
Lying in masses upon the sand,
But the little snow-birds have no fear.

L OF C

The Toiler's Life

The sky above has a dark-gray cast;
The surging tides are ebbing fast;
I hear the ocean's bitter sigh
And see a huge ship's swaying mast.

Like some roughly scalloped wall,
The ocean shapes the flakes that fall
In faint outlines with its foam,
And leaves, echoing its dismal call.

A dark-gray haze o'ercasts the sea;
No flowers are seen upon the lea;
For chilling winds have brought them death,
And the day is a dismal one to me.

Everywhere the snow comes flying;
Clams, upon the beach are dying;
The frozen sleet along the strand
Is in accord with the ocean's sighing.

The sky keeps sending snowflakes down;
The sun has left us with a frown,
And the snow, imbedded in the earth,
Like it, is turning brown.

Great white flakes lie on my sill,
Falling fast where'er they will;
The winds echo to the ocean wild,
That's sending forth its dreadful thrill.

THE STARS.

IN the stillness of the moonlight
Softly fall its silvery rays
On the forms of two young lovers
Whose hearts with love are all ablaze.

From the heavens stars are falling
Far out in some distant place.
One of them has kissed the ocean,
Another is dying out of space.

The lovers stand silently gazing
At the stars along the shore,
When one quickly shoots from heaven,
And whispers 'mid the ocean's roar.

The fragrant air, they sniff from heaven,
And see the shadows of the moon.
They count the stars that number seven,
But others are to follow soon.

The ocean ceases its angry roaring;
The moon quietly hides behind a cloud,
Leaving nothing in the heavens
But the roar of thunder loud.

No other sound is within their hearing,
When a streak of lightning doth flash.
They are frightened and seek cover
As the ocean and heavens clash.

The Toiler's Life

Showers falling from the heavens
  Kiss the ocean, that whips the shore.
When the tearful showers are ended
  The stars come shooting as before.

They fall, like pebbles, in the ocean,
  Making many brilliant sparks,
But none of them on sailors' light,
  Who are working on their barks.

Brighter than the noonday sunlight
  All around their heads are crowned,
Millions of little gold-winged fairies
  Whispering, "Lovers, you have been found.

Our homes are in the mighty ocean,
  And our masters are the stars.
Your hearts are now united.
  We bring our message from our Mars."

THE MOON.

OUT on the ocean in early fall,
  Awakened by the captain's call,
I watched the sun rise out of the sea
In a ball of fire that confronted me.

Its reflection fell on the dancing waves,
While its foaming caps shone like marble graves;

The Toiler's Life

The sun rose slowly in majestic power,
And hid his face at evening's hour.

Neath a sky whose lining was red and blue,
Far out on the horizon it fell from view.
That night when the sun had hid his face,
The moon ascended with wondrous grace.

Coming out of the sighing sea,
She cast her reflections full on me,
Like a lovely woman in a jeweled gown,
While the little stars bedecked her crown.

She gracefully rose in her charm and power,
To control all nature till the morning hour.
Like a queen, this charmer of the sea
Would change her garment now for me.

Next morning at the captain's call
This queenly ruler hid from all,
And the sun, with his kingly power and might,
Came up as of yore and died that night.

When the moon, in splendor, took his place,
She grew modest in her queenly grace,
And gowned herself in a dark-gray cloud,
And in crescent form she calmly bowed.

The stars came twinkling as before,
And she hid her face on the golden shore,
Where the dancing waves rocked the sea,
That is ever sighing for you and me.

The Toiler's Life

MAMIE.

MY Mamie was a charmer,
Living on the mountain side.
And a haughtier little lassie
Ne'er had a woman's pride.

She liked to gather flowers
That in the valley grew;
She always studied botany,
And knew each flower's hue.

She could tell the very hour
When the lily-bud would bloom,
And the dandelion's power
Neath the rose's rich perfume.

She knew each bird that warbled,
And could imitate its song,
For they perched around her cottage
When the summer days were long.

She knew of all the bargains
At the city department store,
But never did go shopping,
Yet her warm heart was aglow.

She could cut by any pattern;
All her clothes by her were made,
And she saw the city only
When the soldiers would parade.

The Toiler's Life

She never will be married,
For she'd rather be a dove;
Platonic was her nature
And she'd spurn the girl who'd love.

She and I one day went strolling
Along a lonely road,
Although she heard with horror
The croaking of a toad.

I thought her very cruel
To despise the ugly thing,
When she'd follow up the robin,
Just to hear it sing.

I caught her hand and pressed it
Where the atmosphere was bliss,
And the shadows of the evening
Bade me steal from her a kiss.

When at home, we sat and chatted
Of all we saw along the way;
But my little mountain lassie
Never mentioned Cupid's play.

THE DOUBTING POOR.

WHEN uncle Primos came to town,
To draw his pension money,
He always wore a happy smile
And called the children honey.

The Toiler's Life

Then he'd walk five miles or more
To see his old friend Blake.
He was a veteran who wore the Gray,
But no pension would he take.

'Twas years ago when first they met,
Returning from the war,
And from that time their friendship grew
And each lived a bachelor.

Uncle Primos, the most spry,
Followed up town affairs;
While Mr. Blake, quite a different man,
Was constantly at prayers.

When uncle Primos visited Blake,
He found a Christian host,
For Mr. Blake was a quiet man,
Who would not swear or boast.

Uncle Primos, on the other hand,
Occasionally would swear;
And when he'd spent his pension fund,
He never thought of prayer.

On mornings when his money was gone,
It was his usual way
To pay a visit to his old friend Blake
And there remain all day.

The Toiler's Life

He'd tell of all the news in town,
Of who got married and who did not,
Of who were right and who were wrong,
And other things he partly forgot.

He spoke of the heroic deeds of the blue,
And then of the valorous deeds of the Gray.
Uncle Primos had had no food since morn,
So he knelt down and began to pray.

"Oh, Lord, I'm so weary of trials and care,
Hear, oh! hear a vile sinner's prayer.
Help me to forget my awful past;
Give me courage to face to-morrow's blast.

"Give us what the future has in store;
Relieve the suffering among the poor.
I have had no bread all day,
Nor food sufficient for my stay.

"Naught, but water, gave my host,
And he it is who is faring worst.
He is eighty-four and kind;
I am old at seventy-nine.

"A Christian man they call him here,
Who always let his light appear,
And like a beacon let it shine,
That men might worship at Thy shrine.

The Toiler's Life

"How often have I heard him pray,
'Give us, O Lord, our bread to-day.'—
His prayers are of the humble kind—
'Strengthen the weak, restore the blind.

" 'Make their lonely lives sublime.
The poor are with Thee all the time.'
It is for them I especially pray,
Who, like myself, have no bread to-day.

"I, like my host, am not too old
To try and be a Christian bold.
Teach me some kindly words to say,
Like 'Give us, O Lord, our bread to-day.'

"Keep us from envying wealthy men,
And on Thy promise we'll depend.
The rich, thou hath supplied with food,
They have so much of all that's good.

" 'Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,'
My host was praying just the same.
Surely he's a Christian man,
To pray and see no helping hand.

"As for me, 'tis hard to pray,
When we have had no bread to-day.
To-morrow I'll not pray at all,
I'll ask my host to pray for all."

MY BOX CART.

I WILL tell you a little story
  Of how, when I was a boy,
I found an old soap box
  And made myself a toy.

To find the nails and hammer
  Was no trouble at all to me.
It was the building of a toy
  That my brother should not see.

But he'd always be around
  When I didn't want to be seen.
He led my little sister along,
  To play she was "Summer's Queen."

Then an idea entered my brain
  To make myself a cart.
And in their game of "Summer's Queen"
  I then would not take part.

Placing my tools upon the floor,
  I used a rod for my rule,
And began to build a cart
  To draw our queen to school.

So I worked hard, just like a man,
  The two now to surprise.
I held the wheels to nail them on—
  The wheels that I did prize.

The Toiler's Life

They were once used on a coach
  In which my sister slept;
And when my mother bought a new one
  I with my brother wept.

Each of us had a wagon,
  But now I wanted a cart;
And if I succeeded in building one,
  'Twould please my father's heart.

I got the cart well finished,—
  As well as any I've seen,—
And both of us drew our sister
  When we played that she was queen.

Though the wagons father bought us
  Were made by mechanics' art,
Nothing so greatly pleased us
  As that dear old soap-box cart.

IN MY BOAT I'LL SAIL.

THERE'S not a flower that ever I loved—
  And of them I'm passionately fond—
That did not wither, fall and die,
  Scattered upon the ground.

The Toiler's Life

There's no reform that ever I planned
  Of cheerfulness or gloom,
That did not fall through and die,
  Meeting Failure's uncanny doom.

There's not a soul that I have loved,
  Or cherished in my heart,
That did not prove false or die
  As soon as the winter'd start.

And so I'm simply doomed
  To sail my boat alone,
And venture out on Life's dark sea
  In sadness and forlorn.

I set my sail out to the wind:
  I care not where I go,
For I am he who plods alone,—
  Not one of them who soar.

To light my pipe is my delight
  While at the waves I'm looking.
I smile with the sun and have the fun
  Of watching my meals while cooking.

I feel remorse, but am not cross,
  When no wind is in my sail.
I simply float and drift along,
  For my boat will never fail.

The Toiler's Life

My little boat's always afloat,
No matter what's the tide.
My faithful crew, that's always true,
Will never, from me, hide.

I sail along. I'm not afraid
Of Fury's sea or pirate's plea;
For though they sail by night and day,
They dare not bother me.

When sometimes my tiller's wrong,
And breakers run quite high,
I am safe and well at ease,
But often heave a sigh.

Not like my young unfaithful love,
The water's always high;
And if a storm, around us, moves,
The sea and I both sigh.

I furl my sail when it's a gale,
Then into my cabin go.
I fall asleep where the sea is deep
And angrily doth flow.

Then if it blows, the wind doth know
That in my boat I lie,
Caring not for man. With sail in hand,
I'll kiss the sea and die.

The Toiler's Life

ST. MICHAEL'S CHIMES.

HOW well do I remember,
When a boy, not long ago,
How I used to play and ponder
Round St. Michael's, where I did go
To watch the climbing ivys
And pluck leaves of evergreen,
To play the game of forfeit,
Without the old sexton seein'.

How I would climb those high brick walls
And into the churchyard go
To read the words on the tombstones
Of great men who died long ago.
I would watch the old oaks, moss laden,
Wonder why the ivy to those walls did cling,
And catch the fragrance of the sweet magnolias
While I listened to the mocking bird sing.

I'd look up at the steeple,
O'er the old church towering high,
And go home and ask my mother
Why such noble men did die.
She would hesitate, then answer,
"My son, some day you'll know
That they're living with the Master
Where eternal happiness doth flow.

They are the Master's sleeping;
In honored tombs they peacefully rest;
Buried in St. Michael's churchyard
Are those whom God hath blessed."

The Toiler's Life

Oh, how I'd like to listen
To those words as I recall
How the chimes of old St. Michael,
In my boyhood days did fall.

The beautiful chimes of the Sabbath;
How on the hour they did ring.
And when I climbed that steeple,
I thought myself a king.
How well do I remember,—
Yet it does not seem so long,—
When I climbed to its topmost ladder,
It chimed out my favorite song.

I'm sure I would have been frightened
Had the old sexton not heard my plea
And rung out its sweetest music;
'Twas "nearer, My God to Thee."
This was many long years ago,
When St. Michael's tower I did climb,
But no music to my soul doth go
As did that morning chime.

I have traveled o'er the hilltops
And slept on Nature's grass,
But the memory of those dear old chimes
Will never from me pass.
I am longing for sweet music.
Play me your most sublime,
But it will not be as soothing
As was St. Michael's morning chime.

The Toiler's Life

THE MORNING AFTER THE STORM.

THE morning was dark and dreary,
Heavy clouds were moving low;
The sea in its fury was foaming,
Showing destruction in its flow.
Scattering, as it leaped in madness,
Driftwood and sea-weed along the beach.
Helpless made by wind and sea,
Stood men and women of every speech.

I stood watching a few hardy fishermen
At work among driftwood and weeds,
With their skippers fast ashore,
While women stood praying in all creeds.
It was the morning after the storm.
Some men were frowning, while others did boast
Of their power to manage their skippers
In any storm along the coast.

But one whose face wore a haggard cast
And blue eyes, kept staring into the distance,
Pulling his nor'wester down over his eyes,
Said, "No man but 'Cap Paul' would take such chance."
With nothing but emotion everywhere,
The fishermen's wives, being much distressed,
With shivering bodies and faces pale, stood
With shawls o'er their heads, but poorly dressed.

The Toiler's Life

On yesterday none of them could venture out,
To-day their suffering is more intense;—
Not because of what the storm had done,
For that their men would recompense.
But their swiftest skipper, owned by old "Cap Paul,"
Had gone to the fishing banks.
He had not been sighted, as was told;—
Though women ventured out to offer thanks.

Wringing their hands, with faces white,
Looking to God, who for us cares,
They thanked Him, who on that night, they thought,
Had answered old "Cap Paul's" prayers.
But one old sailor, whose duty 'twas
To take the news into the town,
Had sighted the boat, but not one soul,
For all of them did drown.

There were six of them on the little craft
That was minded by old "Cap Paul,"
For which some women stood praying on the beach,
While others upon their knees did fall.
The men stood with saddened faces.
The women they tried to console.
Wringing their hands, they continued to pray
For that dear old captain's soul.

The Toiler's Life

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR.

MY friend and master, Paul Lawrence Dunbar,
Thou must live a shining star,
Who held thy place on earth so well,
And with thy poetry and prose did tell
The lyrics of the lowly life
Most charmingly and without strife.
All things thy poet's soul hath wrought;
All nature in thy net thou hast caught.
How happy, then, thou must ever be,
Because thou hast lived, thy works to see,
And with thy charms the poets mused.
Thy verses all mankind hath used.
From thee, no sunshine ever passed.
Every flower thou hath classed
And held it up to Nature's view.
In fragrance thou didst find a few.
Thou gavest us the "Ivy Leaf,"—
Thy most sublime, is my belief,—
And prosing on, all men did see
That they had another Dumas in thee.
Thy melodies will live to show
How freely, from thy pen, did flow
Expiration of a wiser mind;
Yet for more sonnets we repined.
If thou hadst lived in Shakespeare's time,
Him, with thee, all men would combine.
With Virgil and Valer thou would be classed,
For thy poetical charms can ne'er be surpassed,
Because thy effort was born in pain,

The Toiler's Life

With so little sunshine and so much rain.
While soaring in the ethereal sky,
Dream, for thy fame can never die.
One shining planet standest thou alone,
Sitting on a master's throne.
All thy works are left we see
In the archives for posterity.
Like other poets' of the past,
Thine will throughout all ages last.
'Twill cheer and soothe all mankind,—
The effort of thy master mind:
Yea all thy sonnets, we will sing
Whether of winter, summer or spring.
A modest heritage left for all;—
Those charming lyrics from our Paul.
In honor then all men will say,
"If thou hadst lived until this day,
And some more sonnets to us brought,
We'd care not what the world had wrought,
We'd laud thee on to earthly fame
And applaud in honor thy saintly name,
But since thy illustrious life is past,
Our souls in darkness are overcast."

THE OLD HARP.

I STOPPED out of the rain one showery day
In a house where lived a harper pale and gray.
I caught the fragrance of roses and wet earth
For 'twas the month that to all roses gives birth.

The Toiler's Life

The harper went slowly into his music room
And placed in a vase some roses in bloom;
Then going to a corner took his harp from its rack,
Ran his hands through his hair, then placed it back.
The sun shown brightly, as it does in June,
When he sounded his harp to play a tune.
On touching the instrument, every string popped.
I heard no sweet music, for the harp he dropped.
The rain now over, I moved along,
And while closing the gate, I heard his song.
His voice was feeble, I could easily tell
As on my ears these sweet words fell,
"I would not live always. I ask not to stay."
He wondered why the old harp did not play.
Drawn by the music, I returned to the door,
And found the old harper in tears on the floor.
With dim eyes staring, his hand caught a string
And sorrowfully he said, "Why not let me sing?
Far in the distance, how well I now see.
Your music's no longer responsive to me.
Sounds that were strong, will scarce pass my lips
And my fingers once warm, are cold at the tips.
Show me some pity. O harp, let me sing.
Return me my music, if only one string."
The harp said with pity, "Thou hast lived thy day.
I'll return you the strings but some other must play."
The sun was accorded for a showery day,
And hid its bright face neath a dark cloud of gray.
The rain fell in torrents all day long
And pelting the roof, hummed its dismal song.

Then tightening the strings upon his lap,
He made them fast with the thunder's clap.
The harper struggled to regain his breath,
But a flash of lightning announced his death.
When a youth in a garment of purple hue,
Touched the harp every string was new.
He noticed not where the old man lay,
But with harp well tuned, he began to play.
The sound of other music in the room
And the scent of the roses' rich perfume,
Startled him. Then he found the old harper dead,
And made, of roses, a rest for his head.
Then he felt his brow so icy cold,
And continued his playing with courage bold.
He thought of the old harper's musical days,
Then he played, "I would not live always."

HAMPTON'S LEGION.

WHEN the gallant Wade Hampton
Rode his white steed through Broad Street,
We scattered tons of roses
In reverence at his feet.

I was then a half grown youngster,
But remember well the cheers,
Though I did not know the reason
His bright eyes were dim with tears.

The Toiler's Life

I helped to lay the flowers,
So I was in the throng
Who cheered "Here comes the hero!"
As this general rode along.

In grandeur, he was followed
By men of illustrious names,
Who had served in his mighty legion
When Bull Run was enveloped by flames.

Who would dare cry "Rebel!"
To this hoary headed son,
Whose gallant ride at Gettysburg,
Had, for him, honor won?

We lauded him as a saviour,
Though his face was pale and wan,
And now I know the reason,
Since I've grown to be a man.

Who of you would have trifled
With this mighty legion when
Even the roses blushed to see
Wade Hampton and his men.

He was the guest of our city
That faced the open sea,
But the people cheerd him loudest
As he rode near to me.

The Toiler's Life

When he fought in Shenandoah Valley,
All men proclaimed his name.
They told how he supported Lee's cavalry
And lauded him on to fame.

He was gallant in Battle;
He fought in the "Jaws of Hell,"
And the Heavens wept in sorrow
When Hampton's legion fell.

OVER THE FIELDS.

OVER the fields with my love on the hill,
Where streams, like crystal, flowed,
There we found all Nature still
Not caring where we roved.

Over the fields with my love on the hill,
No one our secrets knew.
We smiled and sat, as sweethearts will,
On sparkling drops of dew.

Over the fields with my love on the hill,
Romping where'er we pleased
We watched the robin who flew at will
In freedom, with so much ease.

Over the fields with my love on the hill,
Where shadows on us did fall,

The Toiler's Life

A sparrow chirping some simple thrill,
His little mate, did call.

Over the fields with my love on the hill,
In a woodland where we stood,
A buck was watering himself at will
And kept bellowing, "The water's good."

Over the fields with my love on the hill,
Away from the trumpeting sound,
I asked for her hand and a kiss if she willed.
She, blushing, upon me frowned.

Over the fields, I returned from the hill
And bade my sweetheart adieu,
And blushing, as a lady will,
She quietly withdrew.

So this is the tale of the field and the hill
And my sweetheart so untrue.
Now that I'm old, I love her still
As when, from that hill, I flew.

IN THE WILDERNESS.

FATHER in heaven, look down from above
And bless Thy people whom Thou must love.
Keep them and guide them while they pray.
Protect them; be merciful, lest they go astray.

The Toiler's Life

Help them by Thy love freely given,
To so live each day, that earth'll be like heaven.
Thou hast given them Thy promise of love
And all the perfections for which races strove.
When in bondage, they prayed for Thy grace,
Then guide dear Father the men of their race.
If Thou wouldst leave them to sin they'd be lost.
In sorrow and weakness they'd suffer the cost.
Thou art always true to the helpless and oppressed.
Then defend them, O Lord, in their manhood's great test.
Through the power of Thy love they have thriven.
Make them to understand the mysteries of heaven.
Do not despise them, because they are late.
Help them gain freedom from men, who them hate.
If Thou art willing, do help them to find
Their true position among the races of mankind.

THE PIRATE'S DAUGHTER.

FAR out at sea the old ship floated
Laden with pirates who loudly gloated,
But when at her mooring, abroad there crept
A tavern villain while her captain slept.
The sea rose high, and angrily roared,
In the ship's cabin dynamite was stored.
In a garment of blue slept the captain's daughter
Dreaming of her mother who had taught her

The Toiler's Life

The innocence of childhood play
And of her pirate father's lay.
The stars were twinkling; cold was the night.
When a villain came her soul to blight.
He drew his dagger, then buckled his shield,
And heeded her not, as to him, she appealed,
But pierced her swiftly beating heart
And with bragador, would now depart.
But see his daughter, the captain must
As he spied the villain, whom aside he thrust.
"Monster! demon! tyrant! fiend!
Have you no pity on a pirate's queen?
Vulgar and vile, you innocently smiled
And reeked your vengeance on my child.
Your insolence is meant for more
Than your villainy against the poor.
Your lying tongue, like a serpent's, stung
Musingly upon the young.
When I meet such men as you,
I scuttle their ship and master the crew,
For never has this pirate's hand
Been raised, excepting to command.
Get out you scoundrel! How dare you hold?
You murderous villain , I scorn your gold.
You knave how dare you smile
When you have killed my 'chile'?
You'll make no other trip,
For I'll blow up the ship.
He took a drink from his silver cup,
Threw a bomb and blew the old ship up.

The Toiler's Life

THE ORPHAN.

IN a ragged dress of cheap muslin,
A little orphan stood on the street
Watching the people of a great city,
But none of them would her greet.

She was a child of seven winters
With face of crimson red.
Her feet were bare and her only wrap
Was a shawl thrown o'er her head.

The morning was cold and frosty;
A cloud hid the sun from view
While an Italian pushing his handcart
Cried "Peanuts fresh and new."

Every one seemed to be busy.
The trolley cars were packed,
And an officer stood at a crossing
Guiding people over the track.

Some men were driving in wagons
Offering cheap fruit for sale;
Others stood by taverns,
From barrels, drawing old ale.

The child still stood unnoticed,
Shivering from hunger and cold;
Yet no one stopped to help her,
Save a Negro decrepit and old.

The Toiler's Life

"Look here honey," he said, "what's the matter.
I'm sure you must be cold.
I'm not able to help you
But I'll make myself quite bold.

Now tell me what's the trouble."
"I'm cold and hungry," she cried.
The Negro now touched by her story,
Moved on saying, "God will provide."

He himself seemed disabled
As he carried a basket on his arm.
He thought as he left 'twas a pity
Not to make some alarm.

Suddenly on seeing an officer,
He plodded along in slow pace,
To where a man was guiding
Women through an open space.

On the crowds kept moving.
The clock in the tower struck nine,
While the old Negro stood on the curbing.
Hailing an officer in line.

"Over there a child is perishing,
Half clad and penniless," he said.
"She needs some kindly attention,
If I could, I'd lend her aid."

The Toiler's Life

The people now rushed with the officer,
Attracted by the Negro's cry,
To where the orphan still lingered,
As when they had passed her by.

The officer lifted her gently
And held her to his breast,
As he carried her into a building
That she might be fed and dressed.

"Child," he said, "who cares for you?"
"I am friendless," she cried,
"And now I am so hungry,
But I'm told that the Lord will provide."

Out on the street a crowd gathered,
Who pitied with thoughtful brow,
The child who had no parents,
Though she'd found a happy home now.

BISHOP RICHARD ALLEN.

AN angel came to earth one night
To view the star-decked sky,
But the bold moon showed her silvery face
And back to the heavens he did fly.

Far out on the bosom of the angry sea,
The shadows of the moonlight fell;

The Toiler's Life

While the sighing ocean surged and tossed
As the angel's story, it tried to tell.

This angel in his robe of white
Again flew 'cross the line.
And turned to view the star-decked sky
Singing, "Every star is mine."

O'er the city spread the dazzling light
In the form of an innocent dove.
She commanded a star to kiss the earth
And named it "Brotherly Love."

The ocean foamed and rolled away;
The moon tried, her face, to hide
From the one new star that was installed
To be Africa's light and pride.

The fragrance of myrrh perfumed the air.
When Richard Allen was born.
The star, that fell and kissed the earth,
Announced his birth that morn.

Neath the star of Bethlehem,
Wise men in grandeur went
To see our Savior, a little babe,
Who called men to repent

His salvation filled Allen's soul,
As from childhood he quickly grew.

The Toiler's Life

Plodding on in Jesus' name,
  He sang Wesley's songs anew.

At the forge he daily toiled;
  The shapely steel he planned;
He prayed that God might fit his soul
  And make men understand.

He preached the gospel far and near,
  And Grace from heaven came
To bless Richard Allen's work;
  And his church moved on to fame.

Years he struggled and his work grew on;
  God called and he resigned.
Now we honor his saintly name
  And praise his master mind.

We know that cares fell on his brow,
  As we hear the ocean's bitter sigh.
In peace, dear bishop, slumber then,
  For souls like thine can never die.

SOLITUDE.

O SOLITUDE, fragrant with the mountain air,
  The dewdrops fall like crystal where
The ocean reluctantly sings to me
As I watch the ships far out at sea.

The Toiler's Life

Seen by the light of the silvery moon,
All the world's a gay festoon,
When time is all my own
And in solitude I'm alone.

CHEERFULNESS.

THEY who toil must live and plan,
But envy not the wealthy man.
As they plod, then let them sing,
And find happiness in everything.

Those who labor with the brain,
Reach the goal and feel the pain.
Be cheerful, then, ye toiling clan;
Accept thy lot; live man for man.

CUPID.

CUPID with his arrow caught,
On a horizontal line,
Just one sweet and heavenly thought.
'Twas, "Love, I call thee mine."
Then like a downy feathered teal,
He shot one arrow made of steel.
It pierced the most vital parts
And forced asunder two lovers' hearts.

LOVE'S HAND.

LOVE, sometimes thy hand is bliss,
Sometimes we gain, but oft'ner miss.
Grief and tears will make thee last,
And Death will not thee from me cast.

Glory in thy innocent charm,
That to wise men oft brings harm.
Yet weak men wisely play their part
And kiss the hand that wounds the heart.

THE BROKEN SHAFT.

FAST fades the light in the distance;
Agonizing cries fall on my ear;
Down the shaft a man has fallen,
Enveloped in darkness, I hear his prayer.

Fast fades the light of his existence,
Anxious friends kneel in prayer with me.
Down in the mine's awful darkness,
Even there, from sin he is free.

IF YOU AND I WERE OLD.

IF you and I were old my friend,
And knew the world was new,
Would we return to youth again
And tell men what to do?

The Toiler's Life

If you and I were old my friend
  And knew the world was true,
Would we endeavor to offend
  Men who held a different view?

If you and I were old my friend,
  And caught a youthful spell,
Would we endeavor to pretend
  That we always did things well?

If you and I were old my friend
  And far out on Life's sea,
Even then we would befriend
  The weak like you and me.

DEATH.

SAD is my heart, yet I keep trying,
  My weary brother, to console,
For his child lies dying
  And Sorrow entereth his soul.

Sad is my heart, yet I keep trying,
  My weary brother, to cheer,
As his lonely wife kneels crying
  And he gently dries each falling tear.

Sad is my heart, yet I keep trying,
  Silently to offer prayer
For his child is pining
  Away from sorrow and earthly care.

The Toiler's Life

Sad is my heart yet I keep trying
To see her innocent spirit fly,
As the child now speechless and dying,
Looks above and heaves a sigh.

Sad is my heart yet I keep trying
To see the spirits round me flying.
While her hair, they are unwinding,
Death comes and leaves me sighing.

THE LIFE SAVERS.

THE life savers, who patrol the shore
And watch for the ships at sea,
As tempestuous billows roar,
Can tell where the ships should be.

On bitter cold and stormy nights,
These heroes take their stands,
And watch for the signaling of lights
With field glasses in their hands.

All along the coast, they see
Ships of every form.
They'll heave their lines far out to sea
In the face of any storm.

No ship ever struck the shoal,
That these heroes could not reach,

The Toiler's Life

It gladdens the sailor's very soul
To see them along the beach.

They signal every passing ship
Under the midnight sky.
Whether a calm or stormy trip,
These heroes know the cry.

Every ship, from stem to stern,
These brave watchers know,
And 'tis not fame, they try to earn,
When, far out, you see them row.

Though billows toss them high,
And you wonder how they float,
They know 'tis but to live or die
So they mind the old life boat.

THE CHRISTIAN.

SEE him in his youth and vigor,
With muscles strong and blood so warm,—
A power in the "Great Arena"
In the face of any storm.

Hear his words then see his actions
As he tells you, great and small
Of the knowledge of Christ Jesus
He who died to save us all.

The Toiler's Life

He halts, the great philosopher,
And science in its power doth fall,
Kneeling to obtain this knowledge
For which the Christian loves to call.

The infidels shrink and tremble
When they, this gladiator meet;
The lightning in its ship of fire,
Doth vanish at the Christian's feet.

Art and Wealth must pay attention
Or perish neath the earthy sod,
For it takes the power of Salvation
To know the love of the Christian's God.

FIRST.

WHEN others think—as I know they will—
Of your charms and simplicity,
Remember—yes I know you will—
That they were told you first by me.

LOVE.

LOVE? 'Tis a luring art,
That at some time must play its part.
May it not bring to thee what it hath to me;
Yet I ask no sympathy of thee.
Like some arrow's cruel dart,
It pierceth its victim and crusheth the heart.
Like the wound by steel or iron wrought,
Is that which love to me hath brought.

The Toiler's Life

RAIN.

THE rain is falling through the air,
And the wind is blowing it everywhere.
It taps the glass, rolls down the wall,
And puddles as I watch it fall.
Forcing itself under the sill,
Then rolling down a huge steep hill,
It floods the gutters in the street
And wets the little Misses feet.

HIGH OVER ALL.

HIGH over all my God, I come to Thee.
In my sorrow, wilt Thou give unto me
Some new accomplishment this day?
Lord for more wisdom, I would pray.
I'm prone to weakness show me my wrong,
And purify my mind, that I grow strong.
Grant me forgiveness, though born in sin,
For he who confesseth, Thy love doth win.

WHEN I'M OLD.

YES 'tis well to say you'll love me
When I'm old,
When my blood now fresh and warm,
Has grown cold.

The Toiler's Life

When the cold and chilling weather
Gives me rest,
It is when I'll love you darling
Then the best.

OCTOBER.

COME go with me into the sunlight;
Let us bask in October sun,
Wishing for the return of summer,
Surf bathing and so much fun.
'Twas fun, the floating and the boating
When on the strand you strolled
Watching the pranks of the ocean,
But now the water's cold.

MY EMPLOYERS.

MY muse would leave me in despair
And take its flight up through the air,
If I should, in my book, refuse
To account for all the light I use.
Then, too, I would an ingrate be
If I did not like the roaring sea,
For I toiled and wrote on Heinz's Pier,
"The Toiler's Life." I'll make it clear.
That all the firm encouraged me
And wished that I'd a poet, be.

The Toiler's Life

POETRY.

SOME men who are learned and grave
Act just like an humble slave,
They play the fiddle well for gold,
But dislike the Master's art of old.
They speak lightly of a poet's art,
Yet cherish, in a wanton heart,
The wondrous love of woman's charm
And crush a virtue without alarm.

THE WAVING QUEEN.

NEAR a quiet little cottage,
On an island by the sea,
Stands a noted lighthouse,
Where the tides run high and free.

There the lighthouse keeper
Rescued once a drowning boy,
From a ship wrecked on the ocean,
And named him Shipahoy.

In the cottage lived a daughter
Who learned to love the boy,
And when the father heard it,
He was pleased with Shipahoy.

The lovely little maiden
Confessed to him her love,
But the sailor boy refused her,
Preferring, he said, to rove.

The Toiler's Life

He helped the lighthouse keeper
To work upon the lamp,
And learned all of the signals,
But "shipped" on an English tramp.

Off the coast of the island,
A ship at anchor laid,
But to swim those mighty waters,
The boy was quite afraid.

One night when the lighthouse keeper,
Left him alone in charge,
He signalled for a pilot,
Who'd in tug a merchant's barge.

The pilot knew the signal
And at sound of Shipahoy,
He sailed up to the landing
And rescued the sailor boy.

By a sailor's information,
The pilot knew the laws.
He took the boy aboard his ship
Who in sorrow told his cause.

"One night in a storm off the island,
My good ship went aground.
I, a sailor boy, was rescued,
But the others all were drowned.

The Toiler's Life

The dear old lighthouse keeper
Was very kind to me,
But sir, I am a sailor boy
And prefer the rolling sea.

By his lovely little daughter,
Many kindnesses were shown,
But away up in old England,
I've a sweetheart of my own."

The ship continued her journey
And bore away the lad,
And at sunrise next morning,
The sailor boy was glad.

High up in the old lighthouse,
The great lamp brightly burned.
Though Shipahoy was missing,
He left the signals turned.

They indicated that there was danger,
And to the rescue he had gone;
But the old man knew the secret
That left him now alone.

His lonely little daughter,
Cried aloud for Shipahoy,
And she lost her reason thinking,
Of the departed sailor boy.

The Toiler's Life

Now to every ship that passes
That lighthouse on the sea,
This fair maiden echoes,
"Bring Shipahoy back to me!"

All the captains know her
And signal as they pass,
But the sailor boy reached England,
And claimed his little lass.

And now the lighthouse keeper
Looks far out on the sea,
When he hears his daughter cry,
"Bring Shipahoy back to me!"

In that snow white cottage,
Every day her flag is seen,
And when I heard her story,
I named her "Waving Queen."

Standing on the ship's forecastle,
Her lovely form, I could see,
As she cried aloud in sorrow,
"Bring Shipahoy back to me!"

These many years have left her
A maid with silvery strands,
But I know that God will bless her,
With her white flag in her hands.

The Toiler's Life

ADVICE.

I'LL never go fishing without a hook,
But I'll try to have a "square deal" look
To view conditions from afar,
Then write of peace and not of war.

The problem is easy—'tis nothing new,—
And every man must take this view.
Now what's the use to heave a sigh
And stand around and fret and cry?

The world is moving all the time,
Then why not make our lives sublime?
When at work or when at play,
We can't have sunshine every day.

Just move along and do your best,
And God will surely do the rest.
You'r not slaves; every man is free;
He will help you as He has helped me.

Things are just as He has planned,
So move along and understand
That, drones are they, who find the faults
And should be placed in marble vaults.

Slumber in Perfection's reign,
For you dislike to suffer pain.
What if you are sometimes tossed
And trials, your lonely paths, have crossed?

The Toiler's Life

You cannot on the ocean tread,
So move along and earn your bread.
There's nothing new in politics,
Care not for its alluring tricks.

Why should you lament the lost?
No matter how much blood they cost,
They who are first are never late,
Be honest then and calmly wait.

Then if you can figure well,
You'll find out what the figures tell;
So as you journey, find your place,
For every man can't win the race.

Some of course will lead you on;
When trouble comes, you'll find they've gone,
While others hold you up to scorn,
And make you wish you were not born.

Examine yourself; see that you're right;
Give a "square deal" to Black and White.
You'd never refuse to help a man
Because his face was pale and wan.

You went to school and studied books,
Then why encourage sullen looks,
If your life is not all bliss?
The best of gunners sometimes miss.

The Toiler's Life

You must paddle if you'd reach the goal;
The half can never make the whole.
Then stop and think, 'twill make you wise,
For they are fools who show surprise.

The smart are they who plan and scheme
While the drones stand by and dream,
That Salvation is coming in a ship,
But brawny men are hard to whip.

They're always calm; you'll never see
Their changes, no matter where they be.
In senate or in congress halls,
They'll answer every man who calls.

They'll very frankly say with grace,
That you, like them, should know your place.
Then what's the use to stop and cry,
Women are they who faint and sigh.

So if you're weeping dry your tears,
And never stop to envy peers.
Catch the rays of the rising sun,
And keep out of shadows, if you would run.

We all must reap just what we sow;
It's right to sing, but not to blow.
Then try and make your lives sublime,
And stop fault finding all the time.

The Toiler's Life

Of course, I know you have done well;
But bitter truths other men can tell;
So stand by your guns as you review
The little story I've told you.

Be not like chaff before the wind,
For they who've envied men have sinned.
Know yourself, whate'er your hue;
Man to man must e'er be true.

THE RINGLET.

O MAIDEN, O maiden,
So lovely and fair,
Give me one tress
Of your dark curling hair.
I'll keep it and wear it
Upon my breast.
O maiden, O maiden,
I love you the best.

O master, O master,
My ringlets are few;
Then why should I give
A ringlet to you?
Before many years,
Their color will turn.
O master, O master,
My ringlets will burn.

The Toiler's Life

O maiden, O maiden,
  May I make it clear
Why I am begging
  Your ringlet to wear.
I have a gold locket;
  'Twas given to me.
O maiden, O maiden,
  Take it and see.

O master, O master,
  You've a ringlet in there;
Then why do you beg
  For my dark curling hair.
Tell me, please tell me
  Its owner's name.
O master, O master,
  Am I to blame?

O maiden, O maiden,
  'Tis my mother's hair,
And it must be lonesome
  Growing in there.
Then, too, I have noticed
  The strands turning gray.
O maiden, O maiden,
  Don't turn me away.

O master, O master,
  I've no ringlet for you.
To lay mine by your mother's
  It will never do.

The Toiler's Life

Some day my ringlets
  Gray too will turn.
O master, O master,
  My ringlets will burn.

O maiden, O maiden,
  My locket of gold,
Your dark curling ringlet,
  Always will hold.
Ne'er shall a strand
  Of your ringlet turn gray.
O maiden, O maiden,
  Take the locket away.

O master, O master,
  The locket I'll prize
There's no use in weeping;
  Dry your blurred eyes.
I'll give you a ringlet,
  O Ringlet, good-bye.
O master, O master,
  Please do not cry.

O maiden, O maiden,
  Will you return
Me the gold locket
  You wish me to burn?
Away from your hearth,
  Pray let me fly.
O maiden, O maiden,
  I'll bid you good-bye.

The Toiler's Life

O master, O master,
'Tis a hard thing to say,
And I'll not give
My ringlet away.
I give back to you
Your locket of gold.
O master, O master,
My ringlets are sold.

O maiden, O maiden,
I'll always behold
My one gray ringlet
In this locket of gold.
I will keep sacred
My dear mother's name.
O maiden, O maiden,
Her ringlet bears fame.

O master, O master,
Your mother was dead
When that ringlet was clipped
From her matronly head.
I have told you the truth;
Ask me not why.
O master, O master,
Clip one when I die.

The Toiler's Life

A PARK DREAM.

'TWAS a perfect starlit night;
The earth was clothed in white,
And the cresent moon sent forth her light.

I kept looking into space
While every star up in its place
Shone brilliantly upon my face.

At my feet, fresh shrubbery laid;
All around me fairies played,
When suddenly I became afraid.

I promised them, I would not cry,
But slowly did the moments fly
As I watched the starlit sky.

I begged the fairies now to cease;
And let me watch the sky in peace;
I wish they would, my feet release

The fairies cried "Play we thus.
Come and enjoy yourself with us
For we with you will never fuss.

Your refusal is in vain;
You have caused us bitter pain;
We'll ne'er visit you again.

So if your stars are coming down
Before the break of early dawn,
We on you will frown.

From the moon, we get our light,
And your robe of spotless white,
We will turn as black as night.

We will ne'er refuse to play
And make excuse to fly away,
For we are they who sleep by day.

No clarion's horn will us awake;
Nor will the rippling of the lake,
For we will water from it take.

All is sweetness while it doth flow,
As we live we'll try and glow,
And every leaf to you we'll show.

You, your art, try to conceal,
And heed not our vain appeal.
But try to crush us with your heel.

The twinkling stars you now behold
Every one of them is old,
And you cannot claim their gold.

If you move, we'll tie your feet,
And no stars, your gaze will meet."
Then came the sound of music sweet.

The Toiler's Life

It floated high upon the air;
I was forsaken and in despair
As I lay in the shrubbery's lair.

While covered with their leaves of green,
The brightest shrub, I've ever seen,
Placed me beside a fairy queen.

She said "Durst thou come so near
Without the granting of my prayer?"
And silently she shed a tear.

Now every star I would disown,
Because my queen from me had flown,
And nought but withered leaves were shown.

I thought perhaps 'twas all a dream,
Or some little fairy's scheme
When I heard a long loud scream.

You've been dreaming on a public lawn."
A little shrub said "Friend move on.
Now tired and hungry, my dream was gone.

The shrub no longer did me greet
As I felt the sun's returning heat,
And stooped to untie my fettered feet.

I found that I had only slept,
Like a weary tramp, away I crept,
And when I reached my home, I wept.

The Toiler's Life

When I tried my dream to tell,
A voice cried out, "It serves you well,
For having such a dreamy spell."

THE DYING PRIEST.

'TIS strange; but I cannot sleep,
My eyes are heavy and sore my feet.
I try with my hand to cool my brow,
And the touch is smoothing, mild and sweet.

There's an excellent odor perfuming the air;
It's sweet scent arouses me.
Something has been placed in the room,
In a corner I cannot see.

'Tis not those roses in the vase,
Nor can it incense be;
But in the mists, I see an urn
That's burning over me.

My feet are cold as are my beads
That have, for many years, been warm.
I hold them up before my eyes,
And each one takes a human form.

Now all in my room is darkness
Save my bed that's spotless white.
And through the mists, a cross, I see
With its sparkling golden light.

The Toiler's Life

I try to sleep, but I'm icy cold,
  Though a warmth now fans the air.
The urn is swinging o'er my head
  And my beads are whispering prayer.

Now, even the roses give me light
  In their dying withered hue,
And I hear music in the air—
  I know my hearing's true.

Six long weeks have passed
  Since slumber closed mine eyes,
And those forms of white, I see,
  Will bring, to me, the prize.

My fevered brow is cold;
  I'm living in the light,
That from yon cross is shown,
  Though dark has been the night.

The pillow neath my head is cool
  As grass that's wet with dew.
The fragrance of myrrh's rich perfume
  Fills my room anew.

Oh, could I but reach the waters
  And cool my parching tongue!
I've never heard such music!
  And no such anthems sung!

The Toiler's Life

Now the mists grow fainter
  And many stars appear,
Everywhere sweet music.
  How plainly do I hear!

Now I can slumber sweetly,
  Such music's on the air.
I long for thee, O Father,
  Hear my humble prayer.

Far out in the distance,
  I see a crystal maze.
And the balmy zephyr calls me,
  O God, Thy name, to praise.

THE OLD MISER.

AN old miser, who sat within his home;
  Counting, one night, his hoarded gold,
By the light of a dim old lamp did see;
  And every dollar his joy foretold.

He lived in a house at the foot of the hill;
  Away from neighbors, alone he dwelled,
Piling up wealth in a miserly way;
  Against society, he rebelled.

The Toiler's Life

"Not a miserly sou will I give unto you."
Saying this to himself as he tried,
Recounting his pile, to make its size suit.
"I'll make you!" in anger he cried.

In the heart of a town, years before,
He in youth, with his parents, did dwell.
His love for a maiden who died long ago,
Is the story this miser did tell.

"My mother and father and poor Molly Gray!"
As these sad words were spoken, he'd cry.
"I'll move the mound at the foot of the hill
Where the soul of my Molly doth lie."

And there with his gold, decrepit and old,
His voice had the sound of a thrill
As he gathered the flowers and spoke to the birds,
Who sang at the foot of the hill.

The larks in their flight seemed to chirp with delight
When, to them, the old miser would say,
"O larks, if I had but your wings, in my flight,
I would go to my Molly to-day."

But the nightingale's thrill on the top of the hill
Seemed to make the man's senses awry,,
With gold in his sight, he went smoking his pipe
At the foot of the hill he did lie.

The Toiler's Life

The birds seemed to know, as the sparrows would go
And light on his window sill,
That with crumbs of stale bread they sometimes were fed,
By the man at the foot of the hill.

Whenever it stormed and the hours were long
He silently labored each day,
And for the bright birds singing sweetly their songs
The old man would fervently pray.

At the foot of a mound, far out of town,
On the grave of poor Molly Gray,
Catching the nightingale's warbling sound,
The old miser began to play.

With his fiddle and bow used long ago,
He kept fingering his tune on a string
Then soft and low with the draw of his bow
Like the nightingale, he too did sing.

With the end of his bow he fiddled away,
Forgetting himself in his fright,
And begged, "Let me play to my dear Molly Gray;
She is sleeping in heaven to-night."

The nightingale mourned in the light of the moon.
With its sad song, the air, it did fill.
'Twas the miser's last tune for when morning came soon,
He lay dead on the side of the hill.

THE OUTCAST.

LAST night as I looked from my window,
The stars seemed to speak to me.
So brightly they sparkled and glittered
That nothing but stars, could I see.

But the moon, in hiding, cried, "Hither!
No stars shall make light for you."
Coming out from its cover of darkness,
Said, "Brother why can't you be true?"

I looked at the night. It was dreary;
No foliage could be seen anywhere,
But crouching under my window
Was a woman whose sighs I could hear.

My breath making mist on the window,
Now hid the woman from view,
But raising the sash up quietly,
I saw that my vision was true.

I asked, "What's the trouble my sister?"
"I'm only an outcast," she cried,
"Penniless, cold and hungry,
From the face of the moon I would hide."

Ah, how that voice on my heart did fall,
As I lowered my sash that night
And went to the door to ask her in
That I might view her face in the light.

And when I saw her willowy form,
Her eyes of faultless blue,
And golden tresses, down to her waist,
I asked, "How old are you?"

She drew her shawl down o'er her head,
As nervously she cried,
"I'm only an outcast of eighteen years,
And at six my mother died.

My father cared no more for me
Than do the winds of winter.
I'm looking for the mission house,"—
At this her voice grew fainter,—

"The shadows of the moonlight
Every star from me would call,
Because I am a woman, Sir,
Who in the paths of Sin did fall."

I remembered well when my mother died,
I was a lad of twenty-one,
My father took my sister,
But frowned upon his son.

I had to go, my father said,
And paddle my own canoe.
I always loved my sister,
Where she went, I never knew.

The Toiler's Life

She wrung her hands and fervently prayed
For him who'd done her wrong.
I could not stand her pitiful gaze
Although my nerves are strong.

"Child you are cold," I said, sighing,
Offering her a comfortable chair,
In my small, but cosy parlor,
To quiet her nerves with prayer.

O, why should I be troubled now
When twelve long years had passed
Since last I saw my sister Nell?
She was a charming little lass.

"I'll give you child a dollar," I said,
"And take you to the mission,
And if I find your story true,
I'll give you a good position."

She was quiet and comfortable now
And when she arose to go,
I asked have you no brother, child?"
She answered, "I've one named Joe."

My heart stood still as tears filled her eyes,
Then sadly it did beat,
As I thought of her few sad years,
And pitied this waif of the street.

The Toiler's Life

I gave her some money and good advice
  While she dried her face, wet with tears.
Then she returned me reverent thanks,
  That I knew would last for years.

Next morning my heart was heavy.
  I stood and watched the falling snow,
But my mind was on yon mission,
  Yet I feared, too much sympathy I'd show.

While men were rushing to duty
  And the town clock showed me the time,
I felt compelled to visit the mission
  Before its morning chime.

I sauntered and watched the snow still falling
  Till I felt my conscience must be freed,
Of forfeiting help to a fallen woman,
  Especially one so much in need.

As I approached the Catholic mission,
  A building of colonial style,
And waited for its gates to open,
  A sister approached me with a smile.

This woman was tall and slender,
  Dark her hair and black her eyes;
And when I told her of my mid-night caller,
  Her saintly face showed no surprise.

The Toiler's Life

She rang a gong to call the matron,
  Who came hurriedly at its sound.
She was garbed in her simple habit,
  And spoke well of her whom I'd found.

I asked her name and was told 'twas Nellie,
  And that she had a brother who did roam
After the death of their mother,
  Away from their father's home.

She was out in the world without money,
  And for her brother she would pray
When her father gave her to a woman,
  Who quickly led her astray.

How could I believe, yet I was sad
  When they brought her down for me,
Clothed in a purple muslin dress,
  That she could my sister be?

In the shadows of the sun's rays,
  Stood this beautiful maiden so tall.
And when I lovingly embraced her,
  For mother, she did call.

She whispered, as she fainted,
  "Let me an outcast be."
I answered, "For the sake of Mother,
  I'll take you home with me.

The Toiler's Life

You shall live, my child, at leisure
  And smile with God's sunlight.
Ne'er more shall you shun the moon's rays
  As you would have done last night."

And now my sister Nellie,—
  The outcast, whom man did wrong,—
Is leader of the mission choir,
  Telling of heaven with her sweet song.

Pity them, the outcasts,
  For we never know them right.
So it was with my sister
  Whom the moon shone on that night.

THE OLD MASTER'S "CHILE."

A CHILD in its garment of purest white,
  Was tuning a fiddle one starless night.
With fingers that nimbly seemed to rebound,
She touched the strings to hear their sound.
High up in the balcony of the player's home,
Was where the old master had played in Rome.
So by inspiration he'd now implore,
Parthenia to draw his bow once more.

With her hair upheaved, black as her eyes,
And soul full of music, she'll ever prize

The dear old master, Verdi's piece,
This from his sacred tomb she'd release.
With fiddle now tuned she began to play,
When the starless night was bright as day,
And all around her baton's were shown
While the soul of the master urged her on.

She kept fiddling on to the old masters' say
Who had come from their tombs to hear her play.
The honored souls of Mystic Land
Were numbered among this heavenly band.
With silvery hair and robes of white
And eyes all sparkling with delight,
An angel, who these souls did greet,
Stood listening to the music sweet.

But the old master who once did dwell
In this princely castle, would break the spell;
And floating high above them all,
From spirit lips, these words did fall,
"Charmed by thy smile,
My poor dark eyed pathetic 'chile,'
With thee my soul will forever stay,
To live and admire thy head when gray.

There is so much pathos in thine eyes—
A noble character all men prize.
They'll watch, then listen to all thou sayeth
And dream while thou, my music playeth,

The Toiler's Life

Play me some tune that's soft and slow,
Thy loudest note, let its sound be low
Play for me with harp well tuned;
Such music heals the sorest wound.

'Chile' perhaps thou canst not play
Thy music in my simple lay,
But in the palace of the grand
Where the poor and lowly cannot stand.
No pomp of power wilt thou display.
Like Christ, who in a manger lay.
Born in all simplicity,
Sing thy sweetest songs to me.

I thy charms to the saints, will tell,
So when thou fiddleth, fiddle well
To please the poor and lowly man.
Thou canst help this humble clan.
As 'Music Queen' they'll follow thee
In admiration pure and free,
And this shall be thine earthly task.
Soothe by thy music those who ask.

With harp or fiddle, touch every string,
Thy sweetest songs, to them, thou shalt sing.
While I look into your dreamy eyes—
And the man that misseth doth miss a prize—
Tell me that I may linger near
To see thee smile and offer prayer,
To Him, who hath given such a 'Chile'
To soothe us in our greatest trial.

The Toiler's Life

So I would have thee now repeat
That song of the beggar on the street,
Or sing the one of hearts gone wrong.
'Twill cheer some soul in this mighty throng.
Then play the one of men who roam
And my favorite song of dear old home,
Sing me the Master's holy song,
In whose life there could be no wrong.

Lies in this mound, a man of clay,
So let us linger here and play,
Perhaps some friendship to renew
That in our childhood well we knew,
Who romped and sang, laughed and played
With the forms now in those mounds decayed.
Yet in those grassy paths we peer,
And buried deep some art we find
Not born into this world to win
Dying because it knew not sin.

'Tis well, my 'chile,' that thou canst play
Thy music in my humble lay.
Ought not some angel break the spell
When 'chile' and master play so well
To place these souls of humble clan
In grassy paths of Deadly Land?
To live or die, 'chile,' who can say
'Tis the old master whom thou dost play?"

The Toiler's Life

IF.

IF men were freed from sorrow
And knew what Fate held to-morrow
They'd behold the night with horror,
And, light from the stars, they'd borrow.
If at midnight they could see
The faults of you and me,
In sorrow we would be
And sigh with the raging sea.

IN MEMORY OF RALPH AND WILLIAM SANDERS.

ERE the evening twilight's falling,
Ralph and Will keep calling me,
Far out where waves are rolling
High up o'er the sighing sea.

Ere the evening twilight's falling,
No joy, comes to fill my soul,
But the voices ne'er cease calling
As I try to reach the goal.

Ere the evening twilight's falling,
And showers perfume the air,
A lark in an oak tree is calling
His mate with anxious care.

The Toiler's Life

Ere the evening twilight's falling
In sadness I'm overcast.
No more will I go strolling,
For shadows are falling fast.

Ere the evening twilight's falling,
And rises the stable moon,
Ralph and Will in heaven are calling
And know that I'm coming soon.

Ere the evening twilight's falling,
Sleep, to my eyes, it doth bring,
And I hear the town clock tolling
Where Ralph, Will and I did sing.

Now the morning light is breaking
In the bright ethereal sky,
I am old and only waiting,
I'll be with them bye and bye.

"MAMMY" JOE.

MAMMY Joe is black and fat,
But what care I for that?
She nursed my mother, who set her free,
And when I was born, she too nursed me.
Soon I shall become a bride
And all my loved ones now have died,
But Mammy Joe is still with me
And is as kind as she can be.

She takes good care of the dear old home,
And knows every curio from cellar to dome.
She can name each painting on the walls
And answers every one who calls.
If God should send a child to me,
Mammy Joe its nurse will be.
I'm sure she'd gently for it care
And so I love my mammy dear.

THE DESERTED WIFE.

I MET a little lady on the sunny side of life,
And sadly she told a story of a darling little wife
Who was fair and very clever
And loved her husband ever,
But he was cruel and bent on strife.
Her eyes were large and dreamy;
She had a wealth of golden hair
And was always bent on duty;
But what did her husband care?
He may have loved her dearly,
But he failed to understand
That there is quite a difference
Between a woman and a man.
He asked a separation.
She hoped he would repent,
For she did well her duty,
But off her husband went.

The Toiler's Life

After spending many years
Of happy married life,
She now was forced to face her friends
As a deserted wife.

A DREAM.

AS I slumbered one rainy night,
I saw a most glorious sight.
I was taken up into the sky,
Where angels all round me did fly.

Twelve men in robes of pearly white,
From whose golden helmets flashed the light,
Cried, "Bear him over where
Angels are soaring through the air!"

Then a man in a robe of gold
And crown of gems, with gesture told
Ten virgins, who stood in silent fear,
To follow the angels over there,

Where millions of people were moving along
And chanting, they were, a heavenly song.
The sun shone on their robes of white,
As they were guided towards the right,

I, too, joined this white-robed throng,
And with joyous step I marched along.

The Toiler's Life

I joined in the singing; with voices clear
We sang the words of "I'll meet you there."

Thus we sang, all our heads erect,
Swaying our bodies, every step correct.
The dazzling sun shone just pale blue;
Pearly gates opened and we passed through.

Miles ahead I could see the light.
Thou sunset and the shades of night.
"Follow! Follow in His name!"
A host of angels did proclaim.

The angels high above us cried;
I could not follow, though hard I tried
To keep on marching up to the place;
A dazzling light I now did face,

Which from my eyes now took the sight,
And I paused on my journey towards the light.
The throng kept singing, "Follow on!"
As the heavens opened, my dream was gone.

THE SERENADE.

'TWAS on a starry, moonlit night,
When we boys, on serenading bent,
With fiddles tuned to our delight,
To the homes of some fair misses went.

The Toiler's Life

As we were guided by the moon's bright light
And marched by the music of some well-known tune,
Our voices floated on the air that night,
As we sang, "Dearest heart, I'm coming soon."

To each charming girl our love we unfurled.
Our songs, they thought, were sweet,
As we sang of love throughout the world
On that popular Calhoun Street.
The stars shone bright and the moon gave light
And our fiddles sometimes went wrong,
As we serenaded our girls that night
With a joyous Southern song.

OUR FLAG.

NO need of a problem for the Black or the White
But a uniform standard of conditions right.
We'll ever honor the "Red, White and Blue,"
The emblem of justice, historic and true.
She has seen many battles, leading the fights;
She has always protected the Blacks and the Whites.
She's America's standard of justice and right;
Neath the spread of her wings she unfurls the light.
To millions of people her justice is shown;
Her sons will defend her in honorable tone.
This is our standard,—"The Red, White and Blue."
Let no man offend her, whatever his hue.

The Toiler's Life

SONG.

I LOVE to sit and look into your eyes, dear heart.
Such messages of love do they impart;
Those eyes of pretty blue so true.
I love you, Lou; I love you, Lou,
And those pathetic eyes so true.
Blue eyes ne'er wink, and I often think
How I adore them, tender and true.
You say they're brown and I say they're blue,
But what's the difference?
I love you, Lou; I love you, Lou,
And those dreamy eyes so true.
I will adore them evermore,
For I read in them tenderness sure.
They're quiet, not fierce, pathetic, not bold.
Wonderful story, too proud to scold.
Perhaps you will tell me they're dreaming, my Lou.
The happy vision of my love for you.
I love you, Lou; I love you, Lou,
Oh! the inspiration in those eyes of blue.

THE NEGRO'S SONNET.

I'LL write his sonnet and to all men bring
The Negro's virtue and of him I'll sing:
Of his beautiful character—all simplicity—
And his loyal devotion, in bondage or free.
With deep humiliation he'll happily smile;
Great things you'll see if you wait awhile;

The Toiler's Life

For this ebony master does not lack
In his country's requirements, though his face be black.
He has a patient disposition and inherited mirth.
I'll write of his weakness as well as his worth.
I'll tell of his charity and meekness sublime,
And expose every Negro who joins in crime.
I'll not hide his condition by hoodwink or mask,
But I'll give to each Negro his proper task.
His education and character and women refined
Will keep up to the mark of a virtuous mind.
The Negro's great burden is the criminal class,
But on merit and honor I'm sure he will pass
As an American citizen, and not a ward,
Created in the image of the Lord.

THE SPIRIT'S VOICE.

A HARSH-VOICED spirit spoke to me
On how to live and how to see
No good in you and me.

He asked me why I did not sigh
While he alone would cry
And wish that I might die.

He said my humble grief
Was only make belief,
For he was a knighted chief.

He'd poison my career
To see his people cheer,
For he had no fear.

He'd hold me up to view
And tell men of my hue,
Which would be nothing new.

Just a mutual idle friend,
And yet he would pretend
My kingdom he could end.

In every lake he'd find mud
To color the water when 'twould flood
As though dyed by human blood.

He'd wield his sharpened steel,
The truth thus to reveal,
And keep me ever under heel.

He'd crush me dying to the earth,—
Not for what I am worth,
But because of my humble birth.

Swiftly now he'd try
And in anger cry,
"There, you demon, die!

Dishonored in your native land."
Such as only he had planned
By his cruel tyrant's hand.

The Toiler's Life

A coward's heart is never bold,
So he'd have me sold,
Though he wanted not the gold.

In bondage with a smile
My soul he would defile
And burn it on a funeral pile.

He'd watch my ashes on the air—
But they never could be there,
For spirits were soaring everywhere.

Even on this sacred spot,
Curse he would, though bidden not,
Some helpless little crying tot.

Even they he fain would slay,
In innocence on the milky way,
And open fresh graves each day.

Then he said, "Now, my man,
I'll show you how I can
Execute my little plan.

I'll insert a certain clause
That will tell you how it was
In all my former laws.

How when a nation fell
It was crushed—yes, and crushed well—
Deep as the depth of Hell.

The Toiler's Life

Say you they did not grunt,
And I am frank and blunt,
Like a seaman's punt?

With steel or iron wrought,
I cared not how they fought,
My steel they surely caught."

Then I said, "Why construe
And judge me by my hue?
Knoweth thou that I am true,

For what can it all be?
Speak I well of thee,
Yet you would punish me.

And how well I do hear
Though salty is my tear.
Like you—I have no fear.

Think you I'm an ingrate?
I know it is my fate,
Although I came not late.

I, too, have suffered pain.
Just like you, I'm sometimes vain,
And wish power to obtain.

Just what we now achieve,
On earth we soon must leave,
But to God I'll ever cleave."

The Toiler's Life

The spirit said, "Where do you dwell?
From honor you surely fell.
Why, then, would you rebel?

By your summer's sun,
I all my victories won
With my steel and gun.

Like the winter's cold,
Have you not been told,
Of my power and gold?

Where I dwell in spring
The golden eagles bring
Their prey that dying sing.

Their songs are measured by my scale;
In summer or winter's gale
My ruling will prevail.

Even as the serpent's sting,
This is the song they sing,
'Honor thy Lord and King.'

E'er since man was born,
Your life has been forlorn
And your body torn.

Ah, but my time is rife.
I'm ready for any strife
To torture human life."

The Toiler's Life

A curfew began to peal.
He cried, "Heed my wise appeal!
I temper hard my steel.

Like a withered leaf you'll fall
At my will and call.
Death I'll give to all.

Not one rose, I'll leave to nod
In earth or grassy sod.
I serve my mighty god.

In every little nook,
See my sabre crook
At the laws within your book.

This is no poet's dream,
Who'd voice an infernal scheme
While none he could redeem.

My plans are quick and fast,
Like a clarion's trumpet blast,
And your people cannot last.

Think of me as such,
My realm you dare not touch,
For I am state and church."

I cried to break the spell
As at my feet he fell,
Pale as death in hell.

The Toiler's Life

"You rule the church and state,
And I am told to wait!
'Tis not because I'm late.

I too would you decoy
And laugh aloud for joy.
Think you, I am a boy?

Unsheathe your sword, I dare.
Give me a look that's square,
While I kneel to God in prayer,

For you, my learned prelate,
Here at my Master's gate,
Where you cannot debate.

All your laws imply!
O Truth, thou canst not lie.
Crushed to earth, thou canst not die."

The spirit rose and became afraid,
Seeing hell, where he had stayed,
And asked if he'd not paid

In gold for heaven's share.
He could not stand the glare
That whitened his raven hair.

Said he, "Friend, I am blind,
Or I have lost my mind;
You can but be kind.

The Toiler's Life

I have changed my plan.
Though your face is wan,
How well you act the man.

I see your beauty rife;
You have been freed from strife
And live an honest life.

I cannot measure with my rod
The land you Christians trod
High up and on to God.

There every star doth shine;
'Tis beauty magnificently fine,
But tell me where is mine?"

I said, "My friend, will you
Behold yon crimson hue
And believe your brother true?"

Quickly he said, "I will
All his commandments fill,
But crush you Hebrews still."

And sadly he to cover crept;
While I in heaven slept,
Deep in the earth he wept.

I heard him cry aloud
To an angry-looking crowd
As I floated on a cloud.

The Toiler's Life

High up from mortal sphere,
Mid lights, like crystals, clear
In heaven, I had no fear.

Seven men in gold array
Made music along the way
And the clouds were bright as day.

Brilliant was the heaven's light,
When seven angels, robed in white,
Led me gently towards the right.

While they sang their glorious song,
I saw a pathway clear and long,
And millions of people in the throng.

When the shadows of a purple light
Fell on their spotless robes of white,
A flash like lightning changed the night.

A jeweled cross floated on the air
And I heard voices in fervent prayer,
While the heavens shone—one golden square.

And then I saw a luminous spire
Sending forth many balls of fire,
As the spirits rose higher and higher.

High up I did climb
And heard a curfew's chime,
So perfect and sublime.
And heard a curfew's chime,
So perfect and sublime.

The Toiler's Life

How I with ease did fly,
And did not have to try;
Ne'er did I heave a sigh.

Through an arch where I had flown
High up to a golden throne,
A voice cried, "Here comes my own."

I could not look to see
If this was death for me;
God said, "My people are free.

Now tell me your cause,
And what are your laws."
I told Him how it was.

"Thy skies are of a varied hue;
Thou hath the Gentile, likewise the Jew;
Yet I know that Thou art true.

Is it not Thy radiant sun
That shines on every one?
No man would e'er it shun.

So with Thy crescent moon
And the flowers in June
All in gay festoon.

Like Thy twinkling stars
Mid the thunder's pealing jars
Is light from the planet Mars.

Mid the thunder's pealing jars
Is light from the planet Mars.

The Toiler's Life

'Tis not the tearful showers,
But Thy heavenly bowers,
Wherein dwell Thy majestic powers.

'Tis not the lightning's flash,
Nor Thy gospel lash,
That makes the nations clash.

'Tis not through feathered birds,
Or the good shepherds,
That we obey Thy words.

'Tis not the crystal lake
And the hills that quake
That the dead awake.

But midst the toiling hands
Some brave and good man stands,
Obeying Thy commands."

A voice said, "'Tis well for you,
Whether Gentile or Jew,
To know your brother true.

Long since Eden's time
All sin's considered crime
By men of every clime.

Woe unto him who lives in sin!
If he, God's love would win,
He must be cleansed within.

The Toiler's Life

Carry thy brother's cross.
If sometimes it doth toss,
Thou canst have no loss.

Pray, or thy brother's doom
Is everlasting gloom
And death in a dismal tomb."

I heard another heavenly sound,
And saw angels flying all around;
All of them were being crowned.

They sang a song I could not sing,
And all the golden bells did ring,
"Hosanna to our God and King!"

Harps round me were played
By angels in gold arrayed,
As silently I prayed.

Higher and higher my spirit flew
In a garment of purple hue,
Till I saw my brother in armor new.

And in his hand he held a mace;
A jeweled ensign told his place;
The silvery moon shone on his face.

I said, "My harsh-voiced friend, now see,
Thou doeth well to pray with me."
My prayers, from sin, had set him free.

The Toiler's Life

Now all the grandeur he'd enjoy,
Though numerous schemes he did employ
To torment men he would decoy.

A sweet fragrance did prevail,
While millions followed our trail
With faces dark and pale.

All the heavens echoed in cheer;
None was in sorrow; none a tear shed
As through the gold streets we did speed.

One poet, who had been blind,
Wore a crown with many lights entwined;
And so with one who'd lost his mind.

Some on golden harps were playing,
Others marched with bodies swaying,
And the harsh-voiced spirit ceased his praying.

The earth sent forth a musical sound;
The blind now saw, the lost were found
And justice leveled all around

I saw millions, but cannot tell
Where the harsh-voiced spirit fell.
When other voices cried, "All is well."

And now I saw 'twas turning night;
No darkness, but a purple light,
And no one came our souls to blight.

No darkness, but a purple light,
And no one came our souls to blight.

The Toiler's Life

God raised His hand to claim His own,
And as this light of purple shone,
Many stars shot from His throne.

"This is my children's Paradise.
Freed from sin and worldly vice,
Come unto me all without price.

Come of every clime and hue;
The world from Zion City grew;
All are mine, Gentile or Jew."

The spirit said, "I have no choice,"
Loud as the pealing thunder's voice,
And all the angels sang, "Rejoice!"

At the most momentous hour
God showed His majestic power,
And the purple clouds did lower.

Far out into space we went—
A host of angels on mercy bent—
And none of us showed discontent.

All nations came, their claim to prove
In astonishing truths from the land above,
For everywhere were peace and love.

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WHEN TIME SHALL BE NO MORE.

O GOD, when time shall be no more
And I shall reach the celestial shore,
Lay me down with the setting sun,
To rest when my earthly work is done.

Ah, could I but know the day
When my soul shall pass away
To the portals of the land above,
Where millions abide in peace and love.

Henceforth, O God, who knoweth well
That in my soul, Thy love doth dwell;
I'll sing each day my praise to Thee;
I know that Thou wilt comfort me.

'Tis life to know Thy truth and grace;
Thy power is felt in every place;
Thy healing balm, round me doth lie,
To soothe my sad heart ere I sigh.

MY VALENTINE.

I LOVE you true, like brave knights do
Love's labors ask no rest:
I love you true, indeed I do,
My own, my queenly Bess.

The Toiler's Life

I love you true, like violets blue;
They are innocent, I confess:
I love you true, I'm sure I do,
My dearest, sweetest Bess.

I love you just like Cupid, miss;
I'm only more inclined
To steal a kiss and hand you this
To be my valentine.

WHEN?

WHEN the evening twilight's falling
In its splendor o'er the hills;
And the cricket land is calling
'Long the meadows and the rills.

In the stillness of the mid-night,
Darkly looms the distant shore,
Through the calm and hallowed starlight,
Time and tide shall be no more.

Then I'll kiss the dewy morning,
And I'll heed the Reaper's call,—
Hark'ning to the gentle warning
Prone upon my knees I'll fall.

When the darkness falls surrounding,—
Creeping o'er the distant hills,

The Toiler's Life

Music's in my soul resounding
High above my borrowed ills.

Then I'll not be found rebelling
'Gainst the scorn of wicked men,
And I'll sing and keep on telling
All about the future "When".

PEACE.

WHEN youth grows into manhood
And manhood learns the Truth,
The girl becomes a woman
The woman weds the youth.

When there's no call to battle
You hear the wedding bells,
We'll stop now for the feasting
With Peace where'er she dwells.

THE ECHO!

I can not live without you
I can not tell you why;
The Echo in the distance
Tells me to love and try.

I can not tell the reason
I know your tears so well,
The Echo in the distance
Sad thoughts and sorrows tell.

The Toiler's Life

I have so often found you
  My cheerful willing soul,
The Echo in the distance
  Yet kept me from the goal.

Ever have I grieved you dear?
  Am I not forgiven?
The Echo in the distance
  Bids me look to Heaven.

Fondly I planned our mating
  Away from sin and strife,—
The Echo in the distance
  Saddens again my life.

OH MOON!

OH moon! in your lofty height
  Shining on the earth by night,
With your sweet face full and bright,
Sending forth your heavenly light.

Far up over sea and land
Cloud enshrined on every hand,
Help thou us to understand,
How the deep you wisely planned.

Over land from sea to sea
None so sweet and fair as thee,

The Toiler's Life

Lovelier none can ever be;
Why dost hide thy face from me.

Oh, fair moon, good-bye, good-bye;
Why art thou so sad and shy
Can'st thou smiling, see me cry?
Silver moon so high, so high!

Kissed by a thunder cloud;
Jealous, angry, fierce and loud,
Bright stars swiftly round her crowd.
Coyly 'mongst the clouds she bowed!

Hidden in some distant place
Lightning's flashing into space,
Swift destruction in its trace
Why, Oh moon, why hide thy face.

THE TEMPLE OF SORROW.

FAR away I looked ahead,
Along the rugged road I tread,
Hungry, thirsty, poorly fed;
Counting every mile by rods,
Feebled steps and body sore,
Sorrow followed 'er I go.
At the mystic temple door
There to face the mighty gods.

The Toiler's Life

Weak and lone; I had no fear,
Sorrow followed in the rear—
Always and forever near.
When I heard a robin's song,
Fevered brow my heart beat slow,
And I did not care to go;
For the clouds were floating low,
So I waited, waited long.

Far into the dead of night,
I felt that I was never right;
Where the splendor of the night
All along my pathway ran,
High upon a marble wall
Shot into the Temple Hall;
When loud I heard a tender call
From a pale and lonely man.

All along the rugged road,
With my tired body's load,
I only wished I could afford
To sit and rest at ease;
But at such unearthly hour,
With all my might and power;
I counted all the clouds that lower—
Sailing by trying to please.

I tried to raise my wand
To Him who'd wisely planned,
All the sorrow of the land;
In His time He did proclaim

The Toiler's Life

Music that was soft and sweet;
Some other tune now I'd greet,
When right at my tired feet
Rose up the Temple of Fame.

Ah! I bid thee now farewell,
Lured by a sudden spell;
Listening to the sacred bell,
Ringing its chimes of horror
For some sinner's crime—
Keeping up its awful chime,
Then I had reached on time
The Temple of my sorrow.

THE FATHER'S TIME.

TIME'S marching on in its upward course,
Not waiting or caring who is lost.
By the tick of the clock and the set of the sun,
Man's career is but a passing one.
Time is the author of all delay,
You must count the second as well as the day,
So watch the moments as they fly.
There'll be no stopping; we need not try.
Time is reckoned by the dazzling sun,
Like man's work it is never done.
It sets, then shows its glittering ray,
Peeping o'er hills at the break of day.

The Toiler's Life

Time what preparations we would make
If we could recall thee, but its now too late.
We would all return to childhood again,
But time has changed us—both woman and men.
Time has informed us—we should have done more.
Our bones are so tired and our feet so sore,
And we have faltered and waited so long,
We were counting the moments when the sun went down.
Time is indicated by Thy hand,
Revealing death unto the soul of man.
Thou mighty reaper whose paths we fear
In time, Thou hast finished man's career.

MY HELP.

LORD I know that thou will help me
Along the path I go,
To shun temptations every day;
Oh let thy mercies flow.

I know that my Redeemer lives,
And that He died for me;
My soul is lifted up on high
To live on Calvary.

Thou art my everlasting Rock;
Help me, O Lord, to stand,
Uplifted by Thy grace and power
Obeying the command.

The Toiler's Life

Though trials face me by the way,
I know Thy love and power;
Will keep me, Jesus, while I pray
And help me every hour.

O grace divine, so wonderful,
To Thee I now appeal;
Keep my soul high up in heaven
Thy love to me reveal.

Aphorisms

CHARACTER.

THAT man, who loveth home and brothers,
Is kind to his wife and seeth no others,
Toileth well for him whom he serveth,
Hath character, and fame he deserveth.

BE MEN.

DO not pose as martyrs of the liberality of a powerful people,
Who by their art, science and philosophy
Are high above you as yon towering steeple.

HYPOCRISY.

HYPOCRITES who laugh and hold me up to scorn,
With saintly smiles lay in my path a thorn;
Pretend to bless the day that I was born,
And pray aloud till dewy morn,
Yet hiss, "begone! begone!"

CLIMB OVER HILLS.

CHEER up, young man, and look ahead;
Millions, these paths have tread.
Don't stop and try to move the hill.
Climb over, or others will
Come and push you to one side.
They'll not stop, nor will they hide
From obstacles lying in the way.
Climb up and over that hill to-day.

IDLE TALK.

THINK well, so when you act
Your move will be with manly tact.
Take this world, then, in your hand.
Think not of failure, but understand
That what you sow is what you reap,
And idle talk is always cheap.

THE THORNS.

WHAT if time from me doth fly,
And my neighbors pass me by?
I care not what some men will say,
Because if I find no time to play;
I shall work and battle on.
Every rose must have a thorn,
Frail and tender though it be,
Then why should thorns be spared to me?

The Toiler's Life

CHILD LABOR.

HE who hath defiled
The life of his innocent child,
When from labor he did shirk
And force his child to work,
Is like a slothful, creeping snail,
And his neighbors should assail
Him with the "tar and feather" plan,
To teach him how to be a man.

AMERICA.

AMERICA, thou art a land of plenty;
A privilege of the few;
A mighty power of beauty and wealth
And monomaniacs of hue.

DO GOOD UNTO ALL MEN.

ALL mankind must be treated right;
I'll praise the black, likewise the white.
No man, from me shall receive a wrong,
Be he African or Saxon strong.
Every man must play his part.
Some must labor, some master art.
When men are free, they've a consolation
That will lead them from paths of degradation.
Do good; be sure you do your best
And God Almighty will do the rest.

Dialect Poetry

"OLD BOB WHITE."

ISE gwine to clean mah gun out,
Fur I 'spects de 'possums is runnin' about.
De weathah's so unsettle',
Now's de time to show yo' mettle.
Wid mah axe, I'll fall a tree
When no one's 'roun' but dog an' me.
I'll take de la'k if no 'possum's 'bout
An' Mistah Coon, Ise gwine to rout.
Dar's great commotion 'bout de place
When mah dog takes up de trace.
De partrages is famed fur livin' high,
An' makes great commotion when dey fly.
Dey makes good eatin', an' Ise gwine to bag a few,
'Cause mah aim is good an' de season's new.
Soon's I hit de wood de dog he start
To mastah wid his nose, de rabbit's art;
But in runnin' through de briar patch,
Dat dog was nevah de rabbit's match.
Dey keep runnin'. an' I can see
De rabbit an' de dog a-comin' back to me.
I keep a-runnin' in a roun'about way,
Till I come to whar some partrage lay.
Dey flies, den whistle "Ole Bob White."

The Toiler's Life

I git skyeah'd an' drops mah gun f'om fright.
Den gits on mah knees to make mah aim sho',
But I nevah can tell whar dat dog did go,
'Cause if he see de 'possum he sho' gwine howl
Jus' de same's he do when he tree de owl.
I shouldahs mah gun an' don't you know,
I hasn't got no game to show?
I jus' miss an' shoot de dog,
'Cause mah han's unsettled in de fog.
No wondah I didn't hit de place;
I thought de dog was on the trace,
So I shoots whar de partrage run,
But even den I gits not one.
De buds was frightened, don't you see,
An' in dey flight come straight to me,
Den hides deyseffs out of my sight,
While I follows de chune of "Ole Bob White."
I points mah gun at dem right straight,
When de partrage fly an' Ise ag'in too late.
Dey is so unsettled, don't you see?
An' you nevah fin's dem on a tree.
So I keeps a-shootin' f'om behin',
When, Lor'! I shoots dat dog o' mine.
Ise sho' unsettled; partrage gone
An' evah coon done crossed de pon'.
De la'ks dey all now takes to flight,
An' all I hyeah is "Ole Bob White."

The Toiler's Life

CHARLESTON'S GALA WEEK.

IF you evah come to see
Charleston "gala week" with me,
You need not evah be afraid,
'Cause 'tis only done to boom de trade.

Den, too, we has it evah yeah,
Wid great commotion evahwhar,
'Cause dey has dem red lights in de streets
An' you has to smile wid all you meets.

Evahbody jes' moves along,
An' wid de Charleston people sings dey song.
Wid all de stoahs in "gala" dress,
Evahbody's tryin' to do dey bes'.

De fo'ks dey come f'om all aroun',
Jes' lak dey sprung up out de groun'.
All de strangahs w'ar dey bes',
An' de Charleston folks dey do de res'.

Dey has ban's of music evahwhar,
An' whethah 'tis sto'my or weathah clyeah,
De fo'ks goes ma'chin' on de street
To hyeah dat music good an' sweet.

It's wuth yo' time to hyeah dem chimes;
It make you think of good ole times
When you whistled out de wuds
While dem chimes dey pleased de bloods.

The Toiler's Life

Dey lived in mansions round about
Whar dem good ole chimes rung out
Dey melody in de time o' peace.
We jes' has one gran' ole feas'.

Dat's why evahbody comes along
An' has good feelin's—nothin's wrong.
'Cause if de sky'd fetch us rain,
De "gala" dress would still remain.

An' if de bunnies sta't to run,
It's jes' de thing to give us fun.
Dem big merchants, dey don't kyeah,
Dey has de spunk an' nevah fyeah.

Plenty money! Dey go buy moah,
'Cause dey nevah 'spects to spile de show.
Each stoah burns a red light
To make de "gala" dress look right.

At night de floats jes' moves along;
De streets is packed; I'm in dat throng,
'Cause I nevah miss de time to see
Dat "gala week," where'er I be.

When you see dem floats, you heave a sigh;
Dey tells de people whar to buy.
Another float lak de chariot low,
It tells de people whar to go.

The Toiler's Life

Evahthing is dar displayed,
So I jes' join de gran' parade.
Den, too, dey has a floral show,
Dar evahthing is fine, you know.

And de people sho'ly gives dem praise,
'Cause dey put on dem "gala" ways.
Dey has de habit in dey walk;
Den, too, dey use da "gala" talk.

JEALOUSY.

TEHEE! Mindy, tehee!
Seen you all dressed up in white,
Sittin' down in church las' night.
You never heard what th' parson say,
But, 'course, I ain't goin' give you away.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
You certainly did look right,
With your great big plume o' white,
Tossin' high upon yo' hat,
Sayin', "What you think o' that?"

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
You said you'd go to church with me,
But I seen you with that Lee.
Sits with him right in th' church;
Leaves me outside in th' lurch.

The Toiler's Life

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
You needn't flirt an' toss yo' head,
Or I'll tell yo' Uncle Ned.
He don't know 'bout Lee, I bet;
You needn't try to fume an' fret.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
I'll tell him how you act in church,
Like some bird upon a perch;
Jus' a-fumblin' with yo' book
An' givin' Lee a brazen look.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
You all de time yo' hat pin try to reach;
Ain't hearin' what th' parson preach,
So taken up with that Lee boy,
You act jus' like some jumpin' toy.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
You needn't think you'll spoil my chance,
'Cause I went with Elsie Lance.
She's a better girl 'an you;
She got more religion, an' she's true.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
She used to wear her plume o' white
To the spellin'-bee at night.
On Sunday, like on Saturday,
I always foun' her th' one way.

The Toiler's Life

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
She never needed a big hat,
Now I'm goin' to tell you that;
'Cause her hair was long an' black,
An' she could comb it down her back.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
My girl she has got the hair
An' keeps it flowin' everywhere.
To you an' Lee I say, "Fie!"
Now don't you ask th' reason why.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
I ain't bothered 'bout you now,
'Cause I can beat that Lee boy plow.
Ah, you needn't toss yo' head,
I'm goin' tell yo' Uncle Ned.

Tehee! Mindy, tehee!
Jus' tell him how you an' Lee go
To th' church to make a show,
An' how you turn yo' back on me
For that good-for-nothin' Lee.

RELIGION.

D'AIN'T no need o' frettin',
So I close mah weary eyes,
An' de sun it come a-creepin'
To drive away de sighs.

The Toiler's Life

Den I lays a-dreamin',
  Fur mah weary spirit go
To de lan' whar milk an' honey
  An' salvation evah flow.

D'ain't no use o' weepin'
  When I hyeah de gospel bell,
Fur de sinnahs is a-prayin'
  Fur to drive away dey spell.

I has de consolation
  Of doin' well mah part,
So I accept de invitation
  An' religion fill mah heart.

Ise gwine ovahcome temptation
  A-risin' through de day,
An' battle wid de debbil
  What is always in de way.

D'ain't no use o' lying,
  Or I'll sho'ly feel de rod.
Fur de Pharasees a-feastin'
  Will nevah meet dey God.

'Co'se I don't love de fyah—
  As de pahson say—
An' Ise gwine up highah
  On de heabenly way.

The Toiler's Life

Lak de faithful Christians,
I'll shouldah well de cross,
An' sarve de Lo'd while livin'
Cause I sho'ly can't be los'.

MISS JOHANNA.

I LOVE mah Miss Johanna, fur she's a charmin' girl
An' is shapely as a angel
Wid huh purty curl.

Huh smiles is so inticin' wid huh dreamy hazel eyes
An' I loves huh all de bettah,
'Cause to flirt she nevah tries.

I takes huh wa'kin' evah evenin' when de sun begin to set
Right along de Ashley rivah
An' de worl' we two forget.

We stop awhile f'om ta'kin' to watch de silvah moon
An' ketch magnolia's sweetness
On de summer nights in June.

Johanna start to shakin' when she hyeah de locus' cry
'An ask me what's de meanin',
If 'twas comin f'om de sky.

So I says, "O nonsense!" wid a little shove,
An' de whole creation
Tol' Johanna of mah love.

When de croakin' of a frog give me a little skyeah
An' I throw'd mah ahms around huh
An' kissed Johanna deah.

Den de moon she come a-shinin' on de spot,
But in mah love's creation,
All de trouble was forgot.

THE SHINDIG MEETING.

IN de stillness of de night
I lays 'wake widout a light.
Mah eyes feels heaby an' mah stomach soah,
Ise a sort o' dizziness, don't you know
I feels de swellin' in mah head
An' tries to laff, but in de stead
Mah eyes a closin', dey opens moah;
'Tis all on count my stomach's soah.
Ise allers keerful whut I eats
An' nevah takes dem extra treats,
But when invahtations come along,
Its 'nough to make a body wrong.
Doctah Swanson, I s'pose you know,
Allers wants to make a show,
An' when it comes to treatin' gues'es right,

The Toiler's Life

You bet de doctah's out of sight.
You ought to been dar, den you'd know
Whut I mean by sayin' a show,
Fur evah body on de place was dar,
Even Diltsy, Maud an' Liza Carr.
Now I aint gwine to call dem all by name,
But evahbody come dar jes' de same,
It was jes' a sort o' shindig meetin',
An' Doctah Swanson was aftah beatin'
All de othah af his ulations,
So he saunt out gilt invahtations.
Now when you see gilt invahtations flyin',
You kin jes' bet de pahty's gwine to be fine.
De fus' dat come wuz Eldah Tompson,
His daughtah Mandy an' Mrs. Tompson.
Of co'se de parson head de lis'.
De doctah had already 'ranged it lak dis.
De deacon den come wid his Mrs. Moah.
She's a powahful 'oman an' made a show.
'Tis stunnin' de way the deacon let dat 'oman dress,
Huh fuhs an' huh feathahs was of de very bes'.
De people in amazement could sca'cely b'lieve dey eyes
When up says Mrs. Swanson lak' she want to 'pologize,
"I'll jes' leave you to de parson, since you all has got
a place
An' I hope my little suppah is prepared to suit yo'
tas'e".
Den de parson asked de blessin'; co'se I s'pose you
knowd he would

An' dis way he said it made you know dat he was pure an' good.
"Good Lo'd, we humbly thanks de as we gathahs hyeah to-night,
Dat de' possum an' de coon, hab no claim on human right.
As I watch dese temptin' dishes, how wid graby dey does flow,
I thanks de Lo'd who gin us sich a appetizin' show."
Evahbody thought dat blessin' was very much too long,
Yet de wuds, whut he was usin; was promp' an' true an' strong.
Now befo' Mrs. Swanson could pass dat suppah roun',
Evahbody 'menced a hollahin', "Pass dat 'possum down."
When she got through passin' de 'possum an' de coon,
Mrs. Moah she asked huh to pass de graby spoon.
Den up jumps Mrs. Johnson 'poligizin' all de time,
An' says to Mrs. Moah, "You kin jes' hab mine."
Co'se Mrs. Swanson had moah spoons dan dat laid out.
Dat is whut I'se gwine to tell you no' about,
De dishes on de table an' how de table look,
An' how Mrs. Swanson 'lowed dat she was de only cook.
Well de table was de shape of one great long straight line
Wid white oil-cloth a-coverin' it jes' a-lookin' fine.
We had fresh colluds cooked in hog fat,
But I wont say no moah 'bout dat.
Fur we had sweet potatoes and pearlo rice;

The Toiler's Life

Now don't you know dat dey was nice.
We had apple friters an' apple jack,
But I wush I could bring dat 'possum back.
We had yallah punkin cooked in ham skin;
No wonder my stomach's achin' again.
We had juicy apples cooked to sauce.
Man don't ask me whut dat suppah cos'!
When we got through eatin' we clyeahd de flo',
An' sistah Swanson an' sistah Moah,
Wid de deacon was right dar on de spot,
But I eat so much I couldn't sta't.
Mrs. Moah she kep' a-swayin', leanin' on de deacon's ahm
A-answerin evah question wid huh new fangdangle ma'n.
Well dar was othah couples jes' a-comin' down de line,
An' gals dey princess dresses show dey shapely forms up fine.
De way dey twisted an' kep' a-fallin' you'd a thought it was a sho'.
De men woah dem full dress suits wid de vests cut very low.
Dey was machin' in de pahlah of de doctah's pleasant home,
When he hollahs through de hallway,
"Gwine to take us all by sto'm?"
He had planned it wid de parson when he entahed at de doah,
Dat he'd fus' to entah, not de deacon an' Mrs. Moah.
I thought of co'se by dancin' roun',

The Toiler's Life

Dat I would wuk my suppah down,
But when we sta't to clyeah de flo';
Whethah 'twas meant or done fur sho',
De parson who eat too much to stan',
Kep' a motionin' wid his han'.
Evahbody was happy who hyeahd dat banjo play.
Now dats all I remember until dis very day.

THE GALE.

DE win' am blowin' a mighty gale;
I 'spects dey's had a sto'm at sea.
De clouds is growin' black, den pale;
Yes, de win' am blowin' swif' an free.

An awful noise hab de rollin' soun',—
Co'se I aint one bit afyeahd.
Lor' look at dem clouds a-movin' long!
Look hyeah chillun, yo' mammy's gittin' skyeahd.

Ise not gwine to move you chillun;
Jes' lay quiet pon dat flo',
'Cause de win' am hollahin' an' de heaby rain
Am bustin' through dat do'.

I aint gwine to move, but set right hyeah
Watchin' de windah-pane
Fur I allers hyeah dem white fo'ks say,
"Aftah sunshine come de rain".

The Toiler's Life

My but dem clouds is movin' high,
'Cause de win' aint blowin' dem slow,
An' as I feels de chillin' win's,
I think its gwine to snow.

Hush you chillun; don't git skyeahd,
Dat thundah am de Mastah's voice.
Jes' lay quiet 'pon dat flo',
An', lak de parson, say "rejoice".

Evah clap of thundah ta'ks
To make de lightenin' flash.
Don't tell me whut de teacher say;
Huh 'pinion's only rash;

An all she know is how to ta'k;
'Bout intulectual brain.
I'se gwine to b'lieve whut de white fo'ks say.
"After sunshine come de rain."

THE BANJO POET.

I SE de banjo poet
'Cause I use de wuds dat's bol',
An' I nevah writes dem lettahs
'Less de wuds am true an ole.
I could write of ole Decembah,
Jes' de same's I could of May,
An' de saddes' recolection
Of de poet an' his pay,

The Toiler's Life

'Cause Ise de banjo poet
  Who am full of Natuah's bes'
An' Ise waitin' for de 'proach
  Of de poets time to res'.
Frum de nuisance of his labor,
  Write a sonnet of de worl',
An' de saddes' lamentation
  Of de Kaizah an' de earl.

Kin tell all about de mountain
  An' how de rivah run,
'Cause de hollah in de valley
  Keep de ravine frum de sun.
I am de banjo poet
  Whut writes of de wintah's snow
And de sunshine and de summah
  When de flowahs bloom an' grow.

Dey is buddin' in de springtime.
  Wid no fallin' of de leaf,
But even den de sparrah;
  In his season come to grief.
It is nothin' fur de poet
  His mixed up subjec' fur to fin',
'Cause he go fur de punkin
  On de watah-mellon vine.

He think of all dis wisdom
  'Cause he know estrology
An' away up in de heabens
  He imagine he kin see.

The Toiler's Life

He keep up wid de movin'
  Othah animals fur to fin';
Den he'll write dat evahlushum
  Come in pusson down de line.

He'll write of de sainted passion
  Wid its high and airy chune,
But he hab no recolection
  Of de poet's silvah spoon.
Now I'se de banjo poet,
  Fur I'se simply bo'n dat way,
Wid de powah of recolection
  An' of rhymin' widout pay.

I kin write de rain frum heaben,
  An' of de decorated sky,
An' de correction of de livin'
  Whut am comin' down to die.
I know I'se de banjo poet
  An' I'll try to tell you why.
'Cause I can't make a livin',
  An' poets always try.

THE BALKING MULE.

I DONE wuked so hard O Lo'dy,
  Dat I care nothin' fur nobody.
I sits right hyeah an' smoke an' smile,
'Cause de sun am shinin' on dis hyeah chile.

The Toiler's Life

De coolin' breezes calm mah fyeahs
When I think of livin' all dese yeahs,
Right hyeah on dis peaceful spot
When de othahs is all dead an' forgot.

Look hyeah honey, I has to pray,
No mattah what de sinnahs say,
Ise gwine heed de parson's wud
An' try to live lak a pusson should.

See dem flowers dar all in bloom?
In dey season dey meets dey doom,
Look lak Natuah keeps dem part,
So you kin tell jus' whar to start.

Dey all grow plenty in yo' way,
So Ise gwine change dis very day;
An' 'stead of wukin' de whole day out,
Ise gwine stop to sing an' shout.

Dey say uligion is a easy thing,
An' all you do is pray an' sing,
But since things has growd so new,
I think I'll ask what fus' to do.

Of co'se mah reason, I don't tell,
Fur fyeah I'll git a wukin' spell.
De sun of co'se is shinin' bright
And de cotton pods is fleecy white,

The Toiler's Life

But I don't wan't de parson to think I shirk
To seek my uligion, to please de clerk.
He nevah tell me 'bout de ark,
But he watch to see if I skylark.

He has plenty time to res',
But don't 'spect you yo' soul to bless,
He sit an' keep his books wid ease
An' tell you 'bout de wukin' bees.

But I know dat dey aint wise,
So I nevah git surprise
To see dem wuk f'om eve till mo'n
Den come an' fin' dey honey gone.

Dat's what he'd lak to do fur me,
But bet yo' life I aint no bee.
De sun is still a-shinin' bright,
An' de fiel's is dressed in white,

So I jus' whip an' lash dat team.
To make up fur de time I dream,
'Cause when I reach de cotton gin,
I couldn't tell 'em whar I been.

So I planned a stunnin' scheme
To keep f'om sayin' I set an' dream.
When de boss say, "Whar you been so long?"
I say, "Somethin' mus' be wrong.

The Toiler's Life

De team jus' ba'k an' paw an' pitch
An' throw me sprawlin' in de ditch.
I thought de black was de ba'kin' mule"—
Reckon I gwine tell. I aint no fool.

MY PAL.

WHAT you think of dat boy Dick
Playin' me a humbug trick?
Takes him roun' to see mah gal
Jus' because he was mah pal.

He always boasted 'bout his own,
So I thought he'd let mah gal alone.
An' when we 'greed upon de night,
I tol' mah gal to fix up right.

Sunday was de 'pointed time,
At de second de ole clock chime
De callin' hour of half past nine.
Dick he come up lookin' fine

Wid his shoes a-shinin', lak his face,
An' a regulation red tie jus' in place.
He wa' a shirt wid yallah tuck
An' say on de sly, "Now don't git stuck."

His pladed pants was all in crease
An' his wooly head was 'fumed wid grease.
He wo' a coat wid shouldah pads.
An' carried a cane to start new fads.

The Toiler's Life

He raised his imitation Panama hat
An' begin to ta'k 'bout dis an' dat.
I aint had no time to look,
But laff until I fairly shook,

'Cause when he stop, to mah surprise,
His gal step up befo' ouah eyes.
She say, "Dick what dis fixin' up mean?"
He say, "Why chile its fur mah queen."

An' dem wuds pleased huh so,
She caught his ahm an' wouldn't let go,
But I was glad de evenin' she spile,
'Cause I nevah laked his style,

O' buyin' clothes to make a show,
An' ta'kin' jus' so he could blow,
'Bout the gals callin' him Mistah Dick,
'Cause he look so trim an' slick.

His gal was good to take him off,
But she wouldn't pull me 'bout an' scoff.
Now, I won't call no gal a queen
I don't care if she is serene,
'Cause dey always lak de boys what dress,
Bettah 'n de de ones what wuk de bes'.

Ise gwine to hol' mah steady job,
Fur jus' as sho's mah name is Bob,
De next night Dick, who was mah pal,
Went to a dance an' took mah gal.

The Toiler's Life

UNCLE JAKE'S FISHING.

UNCLE Jake thinks hi'seff quite smart
When he come foolin' round' wid me,
Pretendin' he is cleanin' his pipe,
But I know what his scheme gwine be.

He's on to my digin' in de grown'
On Sunday when I come f'om school.
He try to fin' out whar I fish,
But he don't know I'm ha'd to fool.

Dis is de way he come aroun'
An' throw a nickle squar' at me.
I winks my eyes den stretch dem wide
To make b'lieve how good I be.

All de time he hol' his pipe,
He keep ta'kin' of de fishin',
An' askes me whar I git mah bait
An' if tis roun' de misshin.

On Sundays when de tide is high;
Of co'se Ise gwine to fish.
I come right by Matildahs' house,
So, fur my fish, she'll wish.

I reckon huh mammy tell de news
An' it gits back to Uncle Jake,
Now he's afraid to ask right out
So he stan' roun' an' fake.

The Toiler's Life

Of co'se I lak mah Sunday school,
  But dey should hab one in de week;
Den you see, I'd hab moah time
  My 'ligion fur to seek.

But Uncle Jake's no right to ta'k
  'Cause he's a deacon in de church.
I used to see him leave his class
  An' go sneakin' in de lurch.

He jus' hide his hook an' line
  On de edge of de ole mill-pon',
Den he go fishin' evah night
  Jus' when de fish gwine spawn.

Of co'se you know 'tis gin de law
  To fish out of de season,
But Uncle Jake would catch de fish,
  Den ta'k 'ligion out of reason.

So one mo'nin' de game wa'den come
  A knockin' at de outside gate;
Now Uncle Jake he smell de rat
  An' take no time to wait.

He grab his hat widout a coat
  An' skin dat ole back fence.
He say he's called to see de sick,
  But dat is all pretense.

The Toiler's Life

Now don't you tell him what I say.
  True! Well you cross yo' heart.
Hush! I hyearh de church bells ring;
  My fishin' time gwine start.

Ise already got my mah fishin' line
  An' mah wum-can's full o' bait.
I aint gwine to go to Sunday school,
  'Cause de bell's rung an' I'll be late.

ARBITRATION.

DAR aint no rebels in dis country
  An' dar nevah could o' been;
It was jus' a undahstandin'
  Wif de debbil an' his sin.

So I nevah blames dem
  Fur fightin' well his cause,
Since de right of holdin' slaves
  Was embodied in his laws.

Ise gwine clyeah my consuns
  So I'll explain to you
Dat de wah could been avoided
  If all men could had one view.

'Twas not so much de freedom
  As 'twas de mighty gol'
Dat start de ball a-rollin'
  An' count me in de fol.

The Toiler's Life

Den de precious' mancipation,
  Bought by human blood,
An' de statesmen in dey angah
  Done moah damage dan de flood.

Dey could hab managed dif'ent
  Dan de Anglo Saxon fight,
'Cause de powah of ahbitration
  Could o' settled human right.

You wouldn't knowd de dif'ence;
  Den dey didn't hab to slay,
'Cause all of dem was bruddahs
  Jus' de same 's dey is to-day.

Ise glad its all fo'gotten
  An' we'll face de foe as one,
'Cause on urf you'd nevah frighten
  De Anglo-Saxon's son.

THE SANTEE RIVER.

O, HOW my heart's a-pinin'
  For my old home by the sea,
Where the sun is always shinin'
  Way down on the old Santee.

For South Carolina, I am longin',
  Where grows the old palmetto tree,
Where I can see the river flowin',
  Way down in old Santee.

The Toiler's Life

For a walk along its banks I'm longin'.
I want the birds to sing to me,
As I scent the sweet magnolias
Way down on the old Santee.

I can see the rice-birds flyin'
Where'er the water's low;
'Tis why I sit a-sighin'
For to see the Santee flow.

If these people only knew it,
They'd gladly follow me
And find the best of game an' cookin'
Down on the old Santee.

Of birds, they have a plenty;
Coons are found in every tree;
Even now my mouth is waterin'
When I think of old Santee.

Then the good old steamer Planter,
Whose blows sounded sweet to me,
Swiftly glided up the river
With her freight for old Santee.

Then all the boys would gather
An' sing the sweet melody
As we made our banjos rattle
Off a tune in old Santee.

All the cotton has long silk staples,
And turpentine flows from every tree.

The Toiler's Life

O, how I long to be a-livin'
  Way down in old Santee.

How I lived was more'n a notion;
  Every day was like Sunday to me,
Down where the woods were full of 'possums
  On the banks of the old Santee.

The girls are more plain spoken;
  They never flirt, you see,
For they get the best of trainin'
  Down on the old Santee.

Their ways, you bet, are charmin'
  'Cause their hearts are pure an' free,
Yet they're not so grand as the river
  Way down in old Santee.

Then on its banks, I make my livin'
  Where the shad run big an' free
Like the sly fox in the forest
  Way down by the old Santee.

I am goin' to work on the Planter,
  The deck-man, I will be,
Because I love to see the waters
  Of that river they call Santee.

DONT CRITICIZE.

'TAINT no use to criticize
  An' open wide yo' dreamy eyes,
'Cause you is only loosin' time
  Tryin' to reason out mah rhyme.

The Toiler's Life

Ise been wukin' ha'd to-day,
But couldn't keep mah muse away,
Dough Ise had no time to write
Until de fallin' of de night.
When I think Ise wuked enough,
I write dese wuds out on mah cuff.
"De sun is shinin' in mah eye
Dough Ise larnt in keepin' shy.
It's 'nough to make me lose mah grace,
A wukin' in dis business place,
'Cause when I hide an' try to rhyme,
De boss he ketch me evah time.
He give one ahtful' smile,
An' drive de muse f'om dis hyeah chile."

AN EXCEPTION.

I SE nevah one time thought o' restin'
Or dat de scheme would bring me blessin'
An' I don't think de poet's right
When he view me in dat light,
'Cause whethah 'tis for health or gain,
Whethah sunshine or de rain,
Wukin' hours is allers bes'
So I don't want no time to res'.
I likes good livin', to be sho',
An' b'lieve in wukin' wharevah I go,
'Cause I dont hab no idle time
An' nevah gits a res' of min'.

The Toiler's Life

Trouble will face you anyhow
Whethah in church or at de plow,
So I looks above an' askes fur grace
When de sun comes shinin' in mah face.
I straighten up mahself fur work
An' nevah thinks of how to shirk,
'Cause I lub to see de coin,
An' jus' keep de plow a-goin'
Evah furrow I plow straight
'Cause I aint got no time to wait.
Mah chillun's allers wantin' shoes,
To keep up wid de fashion news.
It's 'nough to weaken evah muscle
So dis chile is boun' to hustle
To answer evah loved one's call
An' I can't 'tend you picnic ball.
I don't keer whut de poet say,
Fur all o' dem is starvin' to-day.
No mattah if de sun is hot,
It takes de fyah to bile de pot.
We has no livin' lak de burds
So I aint gwine by his rhymin' wuds
An' stop wurkin' when de hot sun shine,
'Cause I allers want de coin in min'.

THE FIGHT.

HOW well I kin remembah,
When I was a little boy
All de inclinations
What filled mah heart wid joy.

The Toiler's Life

A-playin' wid mah marble
  Was as good as flyin' mah kite,
But do' I tried to 'void it,
  I allers had to fight.

I'd go swimmin' frum de battery
  Evah coolin' summah night,
And when some boy would duck me
  Co'se I had to fight.

Den some boys would chaw me;
  All mah clothes dey'd tie up tight.
Co'se I knowd dey business,
  An' so I had to fight.

Sometimes I'd go a-fishin'
  An' try to feel mah bite
When de boy would splash de watah,
  An' cause me agin to fight.

I'd grab him in de collah
  An' think I had him right
When he'd smash me in de smellah
  An' I'd give up de fight.

He'd go through evah pocket
  An' take evahthing in sight.
You see I had to forfeit,
  'Cause I los' de fight.

THE "SQUARE DEAL".

I wonder whar all de noise come frum.
Some blow de ho'n; some beat de drum,
But I kin nevah git a chance,
My poah 'pinion fur to 'vance,
An' evahthing to dem reveal,
About dat much ta'ked of "square deal",
I know its comin' so I aint gwine pine
An' wondah if de deal is mine,

'Cause I nevah was among de fus'.
I aint gwine grumble 'les things git wuss,
An' all togethah, Ise livin' well,
So 'taint no use to now rebel,
'Cause de sky aint nevah always bright.
We must hab darkness 'fo' de light;
An' I lives great things to see,
So de "square deal" is good fur me.

Dar is a powahful meanin' to dat wud,
But I aint gwine to let it stir my blood.
I knows dat it aint meant fur harm,
So I aint gwine make no alarm;
An' hollah evah time I sneeze;
Ise gwine to take dat deal wid ease.
On de bes' of terms wid evah man,
You bet I aint gwine change mah plan.

The Toiler's Life

CHRISTIE.

I SE a-gwine dis lib'long day,
An' Ise movin' in sich a mess.
I thinkin' of whut dem Johnson say
'Bout a 'oman nevah fin'in' de time to res.'

I git up in de mo'nin' an' rubs mah eyes,
An' 'fo' I rubs mah face,
De chillun's gone an' de baby cries,
An' nothin' ain't straightened in de place.

Now, wouldn't you think dat oldes' chile
Would he'p me in de fiel'
An' let dem youngah chillun pile
Up dar edication real?

'Co'se I ain't had no l'arnin',
'Cause I nevah been to schools,
But Ise nevah tired of plannin'
So mah chillun won't be no fools.

Dar's mah Ben, he gwine to be a doctah,
An' Columbus gwine to take things low,
But I want evah one of dem chillun
To l'arn evahthing dat's gwine to show.

Now, dar's my oldes' gal, Christie,
She's a powahful l'arnin' chile,
An' when it come to books,
She's de sma'tes' in de pile.

The Toiler's Life

I takes notice of huh evah night,
  An' when de othah rooms is black,
In Christie's room I see de light
  A-peepin' through de crack.

Now, on our pahlah table,
  Fur evah one to see,
Dar's a great big pile of books,
  Wid wuds jes' big as me.

She nevah takes de time to spell
  Dem lettahs wud fur wud,
But she read dem pages through
  Jes' same's a white gal would.

Dat chile is slick an' trim,
  An' reckoned by huh style,—
Tall an' graceful, da'k an' slim,
  She is one high-bo'n chile.

Dar's evahthing dat gal kin do
  'Sides l'arnin' in de books.
She's allers willin' to be he'pin' you
  Widout dem stubbo'n looks,

Now, aftah all dat I has done
  To he'p dem chillun all,
Dar's not another cussed one
  Dat'll come when dey mammy call.

The Toiler's Life

Now, Ben, 'cause he's de oldes' son,
  Jes' think himseff a man.
Columbus, he's anothah one
  Whut laks to scheme an' plan.

Neithah one of dem's a bit
  Of sarvice to dey ma,
But it's dey mammy's greates' wush
  Dat dey'll be lak dey pa.

If dey gits a book and tries to read,
  Dey readin's only sham;
But I hope some day dey will succeed
  And wuk fur "Uncle Sam."

Now, den, dar come mah baby Joe.
  As he look at me an' smile,
Somehow he make his mammy know
  He's a sweetes' darlin' chile.

Ise not gwine to put no chillun 'fo'
  Mah lovin' baby chile,
'Cause he de only one gwine to wuk
  While his mammy res' awhile.

I nevah likes things to git misty,
  An' would nevah have to stop an' clean,
But dat dar gal, Miss Christie,
  Jes' think huhseff a queen.

Appendix

aftah ..... after
afyeahd ..... afraid
agin ..... again
ahbitration ... arbitration
ahm ..... arm
ahtful ..... artful
allers ..... always
'an ..... than
angah ..... anger
another ..... another

b'ak ..... balk
ba'kin' ..... balking
ban's ..... bands
befo' ..... before
behin' ..... behind
bes' ..... best
bettah ..... better
bettah'n ..... better than
bile ..... boil
b'lieve ..... believe
bol' ..... bold
bo'n ..... born
boun' ..... bound
'bout ..... about
bruddahs .... brothers
buds ..... birds

'cause ..... because
chillun ..... children
chillun's ..... children's
chune ..... tune
clyeah ..... clear
clyeahd ..... cleared
collah ..... collar
consuns ..... conscience
cos' ..... cost
co'se ..... course
cussed ..... cursed
d'aint ..... there aint
deah ..... dear
da'k ..... dark
dan ..... than
dar ..... there or their
dar's ..... there's
dat ..... that
dat'll ..... that'll
daughtah ..... daughter
de ..... the
debbil ..... devil
Decembah .... December
dem ..... them
dem's ..... them's
den ..... then
dese ..... these
dey ..... they
dey'd ..... they'd
dey'll ..... they'll
dif'ence ..... difference
dif'ent ..... different
do' ..... though
doah ..... door
doctah ..... doctor
dough ..... though
'dout ..... without

eldah ..... elder
'em ..... them
entah ..... enter
entahed ..... entered
evah ..... every
evahbody ..... everybody
evahlushun ... evolution
evahthing .... everything

evahwhar ....everywhere

feas' .....feast
feathahs .....feathers
fiel's .....fields
fin' .....find
fin'in' .....finding
fin's .....finds
flo' .....floor
flowahs .....flowers
'fo' .....before
fo'gotten .....forgotten
fo'ks .....folks
fol' .....fold
f'om .....from
foun' .....found
frum .....from
'fumed .....perfumed
fur .....for
fus' .....first
fyah .....fire
fyeah .....fear

gathahs .....gathers
gin ..... give or gave
gol' .....gold
goin' .....going
graby .....gravy
gran' .....grand
greates' .....greatest
'greed .....agreed
gues'es ..... guests
gwine .....going

hab .....have
ha'd .....hard
han' .....hand
han's .....hands
heaben .....heaven
heabenly .....heavenly
he'p ..... help
he'pin' .... helping
highah .. higher
himself .....himself
hi'seff .....hisself

hol' .....hold
hollah .....holler
hollahin' ..... hollering
ho'n .....horn
huh .....her
huhseff .....herself
hyeah .....here or hear
hyeahd .....heard

inticin' .....inticing
intulectual ....intellectual
invahtation ...invitation
Ise .....I is

jes' .....just
jus' .....just

Kaizah .....Kaiser
keer .....care
keerful .....careful
kep' .....kept
ketch .....catch
kin .....can
knowd .....knew
kyeah .....care

laff .....laugh
lak .....like
laked .....liked
la'ks .....larks
lan' .....land
larn .....learn
larnin' .....learning
larnt .....learned
las' .....last
les' .....lest
lettahs .....letters
lib .....live
'ligion .....religion
lis' .....list
Lo'd .....Lord
Lo'dy .....Lordy
locus' .....locust
Lor' .....Lord
los' .....lost

lowed ..... said
lub ..... love

ma'chin' ..... marching
mah ..... my
mahseff ..... myself
ma'm ..... ma'an
mastah ..... master
mattah ..... matter
'menced ..... commenced
min' ..... mind
misshin ..... mission
mistah ..... mister
moah ..... more
mo'n ..... morn
mo'nin' ..... morning

mus' ..... must
natuah ..... nature
neithah ..... neither
nevah ..... never
nothin's ..... nothing's
'nough ..... enough

o' ..... of
oldes' ..... oldest
ole ..... old
'oman ..... woman
othah ..... other
othahs ..... others
ouah ..... our

pahlah ..... parlor
pahty ..... party
'pinion ..... opinion
poah ..... pour or poor
'pointed ..... appointed
'pologize ..... apologize
'pologizin' ..... apologizing
pon' ..... upon
'pon ..... pond
'possums ..... opossums
powah ..... power
powahful ..... powerful
'proach ..... approach
promp' ..... prompt
punkin ..... pumpkin
purty ..... pretty
pusson ..... person

'ranged ..... arranged
remembah ..... remember
res' ..... rest
rivah ..... river
roun' ..... round

saddes' ..... saddest
same's ..... same as
sarve ..... serve
sarvice ..... service
saunt ..... sent
seffs ..... selves
sho' ..... sure
sho'ly ..... surely
sho's ..... sure as
shouldah ..... shoulder
sich ..... such
'sides ..... besides
silvah ..... silver
sinnah ..... sinner
sistah ..... sister
sky'd ..... sky would
skyeah ..... scare
smartes' ..... smartest
smellah ..... smeller
soah ..... sore
soun' ..... sound
sparrah ..... sparrow
'spects ..... expects
spile ..... spoil
s'pose ..... suppose
stan' ..... stand
sta't ..... start
'stead ..... instead
stoahs ..... stores
sto'm ..... storm
strangahs ..... strangers
stubbo'n ..... stubborn
subjec' ..... subject

summah ..... summer
suppah ..... supper
sweetes' ..... sweetest
swif' ..... swift

'taint ..... it aint
ta'k ..... talk
ta'ked ..... talked
ta'kin' ..... talking
tas'e ..... taste
'tend ..... attend
th' ..... the
thundah ..... thunder
togethah ..... together
tol' ..... told

ulations ..... relations
uligion ..... religion
undahstandin'. understanding
urf ..... earth

'vance ..... advance
'void ..... avoid

wa'den ..... warden
wah ..... war
wa'k ..... walk
wa'kin' ..... walking
'wake ..... awake
war ..... ware
watah-mellon .water-mellon
weathah ..... weather
weddah ..... weather
whar ..... where
whethah ..... whether
whut ..... what
wid ..... with
widout ..... without
wif ..... with
win' ..... wind
windah-pane .window-pane
wintah ..... winter
wo' ..... wore
woah ..... wore
wondah ..... wonder
worl' ..... world
wud ..... word
wuds ..... words
wuk ..... work
wuked ..... worked
wukin' ..... working
wush ..... wish
wuss ..... worse
wuth ..... worth
wum-can ..... worm-can

yallah ..... yellow
yeahs ..... years
yo' ..... your
youngah ..... younger

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Deacidified using the Bookkeepe
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium C
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